

Australian

# Wild

bushwalking, ski touring,  
canoeing and climbing magazine

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Wild side

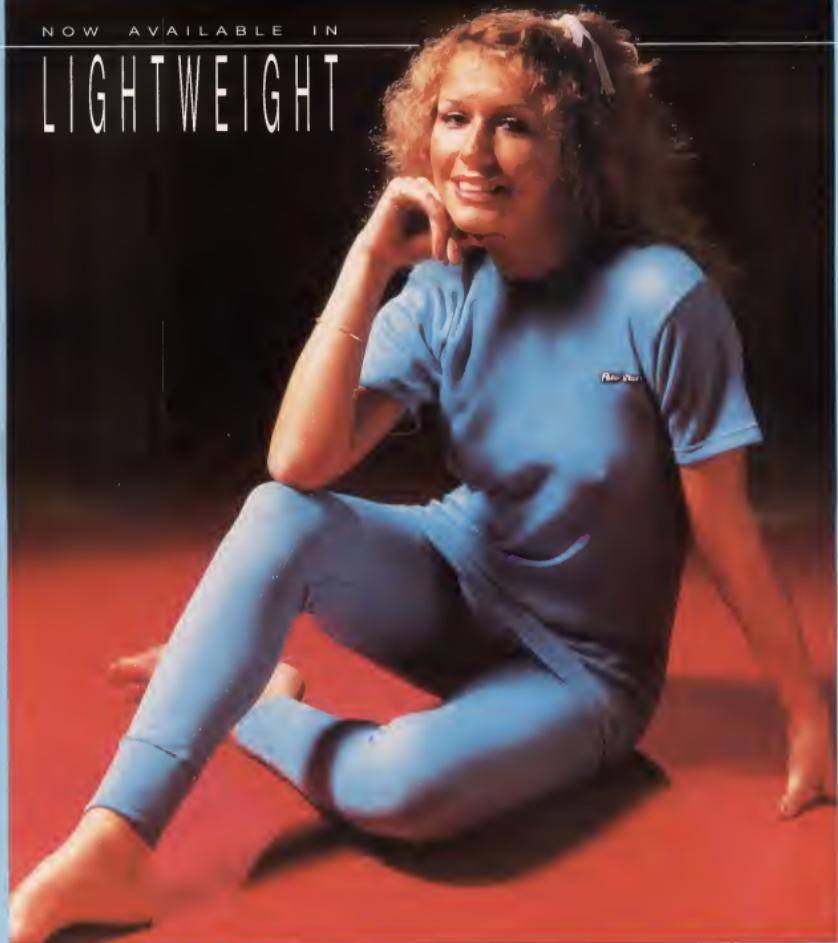
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# Wild

bushwalking, ski touring  
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Summer (January February March) 1985, Vol 5 No 1 (issue 15) \$3.60\* NZ\$4.95

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**Cover** Organizers of the successful First Australian Mt Everest Expedition, Lincoln Hall, left, and Tim Macartney-Snape, below the North Face of Mt Everest. (See Macartney-Snape's account of the climb on page 26.) Photo Macartney-Snape collection. **Contents** Base Camp, below the North Face of Mt Everest. Photo Macartney-Snape. \*Maximum recommended retail price only

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**Contributions**, preferably well illustrated with slides, are welcome. *Guidelines for Contributors* are available on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Submissions must be typewritten, double-spaced with wide margins, using only one side of the paper, and accompanied by an envelope and sufficient postage for their return. Names and addresses should be written on manuscripts and photos as well. While every care is taken, we accept no responsibility for material submitted. Articles represent the views of the authors, and not necessarily those of the publisher.

# Editorial

## Everest: The Other Side

NOT PARTICULARLY CHARITABLE AT THE BEST of the times, the climbing world has not dealt kindly with the fact that New Zealander Peter Hillary's succession of Himalayan climbing expeditions has produced disasters instead of summits. The news of his latest tragic failure, on the West Ridge of Mt Everest, the subject of an article and a *Wild* Information item in this issue, has fuelled the attack, much of which has not been made publicly. *Wild* regards such an assault as largely the product of ignorance, jealousy and a desire to cut down 'tall poppies', which seems to be a dominant trait of antipodean mentality.

Certainly, Hillary's objectives have been major ones attempted in an adventurous, even daring, style. But this 'alpine style' approach is now accepted as the way in which almost all routes on major Himalayan peaks are repeated. The climbs attempted by Hillary on Ama Dablam, Lhotse, Makalu and Everest are not the easiest ways up these mountains but neither are they in any respect unrealistic objectives for his style of ascent. The four climbers killed on Hillary's last two expeditions have included, without doubt, some of Australasia's best qualified mountaineers. All intelligent, responsible adults with considerable mountain experience, they chose, of their own free will, to join Hillary's teams and to attempt the chosen objectives in the manner adopted. All died, in separate accidents, from unroped falls on descent, due to their own errors. In no case, by even the most obtuse logic, can Hillary be blamed for their deaths. (Because of the scale of Himalayan climbing it is not practicable for climbers to move one at a time protected by a rope on easier ground. Whether or not two climbers moving together on easier ground should be roped depends entirely on whether the rope could be used to arrest a slip by one climber, or whether such an event might cause two deaths instead of only one — the old conundrum of mountaineering.)

The Himalayas are an extremely dangerous place to climb, a fact all-too-well documented in the annals of the region's climbing. Mountaineering could never be considered a 'safe' pastime; there are simply too many factors over which mountaineers have little or no control. In the Himalayas these factors are greatly magnified by scale and altitude and, perhaps, even the area's grisly reputation. As I have argued in Rock 1985, these risks can be reduced by extremely thorough preparation and a long apprenticeship, but they cannot be removed entirely. The careers of the most successful Himalayan climbers, including those of Tim Macartney-Snape's team, reflect long (initially relatively humble) Himalayan apprenticeships and the most thorough preparation in every respect. Perhaps not all of

Hillary's companions have had such apprenticeships or were so thoroughly prepared for 'the summits of dreams'.

In many things the line between success and failure is often considerably finer than is



generally recognized. But there must be few activities in which the gulf between the results of success and failure can be as wide as it can be in mountaineering — utter elation or tragic death. Such is the nature of Himalayan climbing that I am sure Tim Macartney-Snape would agree that the extreme fortunes of Australia's first two Mt Everest expeditions might easily have been completely reversed. Rather than rushing to judge and condemn, we might pause to reflect on, learn from, the vision and courage of the members of both expeditions and try to share the sense of loss with those whose companions paid the ultimate price. •

*Chris Baxter*  
Chris Baxter  
Editor & Publisher

• Those who bought this issue of *Wild* over the counter will have noticed an increase in the cover price, the first in over two years. During that time the number of pages in *Wild* has risen from 92 to 100 and the colour content has increased considerably. The percentage of advertising in the magazine has remained unchanged throughout. •

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# Wild Information

## Success and Tragedy on Mt Everest



• **Mt Everest.** On 3 October Tim Macartney-Snape and Greg Mortimer became the first Australians to reach the highest point on earth. Their expedition included Australians Geoff Bartram, Lincoln Hall and Andrew Henderson. *Wild* was an official sponsor. The mountain was climbed from Tibet, by a major new route on the 3,000 metre North Face.

The team was beset by a number of set-backs that included avalanches hitting two camps and causing the loss of much valuable equipment, unseasonably deep snow and low temperatures. Nevertheless four camps were set up on the mountain and the climb was completed safely and without artificial oxygen. The expedition's chances of success had not been rated high by many pundits before it left for Tibet. But it has answered them with an outstanding achievement which, in fact, crowns a long and most impressive apprenticeship on other Himalayan peaks. (See article on Annapurna II in *Wild* no 12.)

Six days after this success, young Melbourne climber Craig Nottle (see his article in *Wild* no 14) was tragically killed in a fall from the West Ridge of Mt Everest. The tragedy was compounded when Himalayan veteran (and the only Australian to reach 8,000 metres three times), Fred From of Brisbane, slipped while descending after Nottle fell and also plunged to his death. The expedition, led by Peter Hillary (New Zealand) and including top New Zealand mountaineer Kim Logan, brilliant Australian alpinist Jon Muir and Ross Mackenzie (Australia), was then called off.

The ill-fated expedition had embarked on an ambitious undertaking — a lightweight, alpine-style attempt on the technically difficult West Ridge (which is approached from Nepal) without

Above, Tim Macartney-Snape at 7,800 metres on the North Face of Mt Everest. Right, Daintree blockade. Greg Mortimer and Wilderness Society

artificial oxygen. The team was well within striking distance of the summit when the accidents occurred.

From and Hillary were the survivors of the ill-fated expedition to Makalu in 1983 (see From's article in *Wild* no 12) on which From put his life at great risk climbing down to try and reach Mark Moorhead's body. It is particularly poignant that a year later he died (on his birthday) in not greatly dissimilar circumstances.

For full accounts of the Everest climbs see page 26.

• **Running High.** Lamington National Park, Queensland, is the venue for a 'runners meet' in March that will include a series of runs and lectures. Details are available from Binna-Burra Lodge, Beechmont, Queensland 4211.

• **Daintree.** Only weeks after the Australian Labor Party's National Conference adopted a resolution supporting the investigation of the area for World Heritage listing and opposing the construction of the road through Queensland's Cape Tribulation National Park, the Douglas Shire Council sent the bulldozers into action.

The council, with funds from the Queensland Government, proceeded to bulldoze a road through what until only a few weeks earlier, had been a part of the Cape Tribulation National Park. The road was unsurveyed and is expected to erode badly in the wet season. Several hundred people blockaded progress on the road for some weeks with varying degrees of success. The publicity surrounding the blockade increased the mounting pressure on the Federal

Government to nominate the area for World Heritage listing.

A motion before Federal Labor caucus supporting the nomination of the area was deferred several times and finally withdrawn after an opinion poll indicated that the Government could lose votes in several marginal Queensland seats in a States' rights battle. Following the withdrawal of the motion the Federal Government Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, Mr Cohen, announced that the Federal Government would only nominate the area if the Queensland Government agreed. Predictably, Queensland Premier Bjelke-Petersen scorned the idea.

The campaign for the reservation of the Daintree area has a long way to go but the



growing media interest and ground-swell of public opinion indicates that while the first battle has been lost it will be a long war.

Bob Burton

• **Jenolan Protection Group.** A group of cavers has recently formed the Jenolan Environment Protection Committee because of alleged mismanagement at New South Wales' Jenolan Caves Reserve.

Particular issues in contention are the pollution of the Jenolan River due to inadequate sewage treatment, and the lack of planning for developments within the reserve.

The pollution of the river is a serious issue because a public camping reserve is being developed downstream of the sewage treatment plant. The Jenolan River is also a significant contributor to pollution of the Coxs River, one of the most popular destinations for bushwalkers in the southern Blue Mountains.

Information about the committee can be obtained from the Secretary, Geoff Innes, PO Box 75, Wentworth Building, Sydney University, New South Wales 2006.

Roger Lembit

• **Federal Bushfire Inquiry.** The House of Representatives Environment Committee has released the report of its inquiry into the



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29 December-5 January

12-19 January

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environmental impact of bushfires. The findings of the inquiry reflect the major input submitted by New South Wales conservation groups.

Significant findings of the committee from the conservation viewpoint are that: environmental impacts of hazard reduction burning operations should be considered before burning; in some cases it may be appropriate that no action be taken to prevent or contain bushfires; authorities should take more care in fire prevention activities and post-fire restoration; and much more research is required on the environmental impacts of fire control methods.

The report presents a balanced viewpoint on fire management and control issues. It should prove a useful publication for conservationists trying to expose the pyromaniacs who hide behind the name of the bushfire authorities in each State.

RL

• **Woodchipping Extension.** In June 1984 the Federal Minister for Primary Industry approved a five-year extension of the licence for a sawmilling company to export woodchips from operations on the north coast of New South Wales. This renewal incorporated an expansion in the sources of supply from which the company was entitled to obtain woodchips.

Original approval by the New South Wales Cabinet in 1978 was for use of sawmill residues and logging wastes. At that time the then Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Landa, stated that 'any extension of the present proposal will require a further assessment of environmental impact'. Conservationists felt this was a clear indication that an Environmental Impact Statement would be required for any expansion and have called for the withdrawal of permission to export woodchips from the additional material.

RL

• **Cave Rescue.** The Goulburn Police Rescue Squad was praised for its prompt action in rescuing a schoolboy from Bungonia Caves, New South Wales, recently. The unfortunate student fell in Dinosaur Cave B:71 whilst free climbing down the final pitch, which was treacherously wet and slippery. He was unconscious for a short time and concussion had limited the mobility of his lower limbs.

Within 15 minutes the alarm was raised at the Ranger's residence. The rescue squad, an ambulance and a doctor were on the scene only 30 minutes later. The student was admitted to Goulburn District Hospital within two hours of being injured. This time included a wait of 20 minutes while the doctor examined the victim, on site, before allowing the rescuers to move him.

SB

• **Tiger for Punishment.** Peter Treseder recently established no less than four new speed walking records in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales: Katoomba to Kanangra Walls in six hours nine minutes, Katoomba to Mittagong in 15 hours 26 minutes, Katoomba to Mt Guoguang (return) in nine hours 40 minutes, and the Obscure Circuit in six hours 31 minutes.

• **Climbing.** In August 1964 the ascent of Hocus Pocus marked the start of rockclimbing at what has become the most popular climbing area in the Blue Mountains, Mt Piddington. At a celebration of the area's twentieth anniversary the first ascent team attempted a repeat of their classic 'doddle'.

A body calling itself the Rockclimbing Instructors Association of Australia has been established with a view to introducing

standardization of rockclimbing instruction. Further details are available through Torre (see Suppliers Directory).

• **What's Cooking?** Karrimor Australia has announced a competition to find the best, original outdoor recipes which can be produced on the Trangia cooking equipment which it distributes in Australia. Entries (to 148 Queen Street, Alexandria, New South Wales 2014) close on 31 January 1985.

• **Kangaroo Culling.** Following a recent aerial survey of kangaroo numbers which showed that during the previous year there had been a 40% reduction of kangaroos in the commercially harvested areas of far western New South Wales, the commercial culling of kangaroos in a wide area of NSW is to cease until at least mid-1985.

The Victorian President of the RSPCA has called on the State Government to buy back marginal farming land rather than remove native animals, particularly kangaroos.

The respected international conservation organization, Greenpeace, has called for non-violent direct action to save kangaroos which, it claims, have had their numbers decimated by about 70% since 1980. Greenpeace is urging its American members to lobby the Reagan Administration to revise its decision permitting the import of kangaroo products to the USA.

• **New South Wales Park News.** A new coastal National Park, Tomaree, an area of 800 hectares, has been established near Newcastle. Since 1976 the length of New South Wales coastline incorporated into reserves has doubled from 17% to 34%.

After an 18-month closure to allow for the rehabilitation of areas affected by heavy

use, the Bonnie Vale camping area in Royal National Park near Sydney was reopened in December.

A firm of architects has been commissioned to prepare a major conservation plan for the quarantine station at Sydney's North Head. It is expected that a draft plan will be available for public exhibition by mid-1985.

A draft plan of management for the Illawarra State Recreation Area, on the escarpment behind Wollongong, was on public display until the end of November.

A plan of management for Myall Lakes National Park, near Newcastle, was released in August. In future there are to be fewer facilities for boats and vehicles because of the damage they have caused.

The NSW Government has introduced computer-based fire management techniques to help prevent bushfires in the Blue Mountains National Park.

A 'Back-country Visitor Use Form' for bushwalkers and ski tourers has been introduced in Kosciusko National Park. It is not a search and rescue form but is for data collection.

• **Dr Joseph Newell Jennings.** The grand old man of Australian caving, Joe Jennings, died last winter. He was a well known, liked and respected figure in Australian caving circles and world renowned for his studies in geomorphology. He held the position of Reader in Geomorphology at the Australian National University and his study papers cover topics as diverse as soils, cold climate landforms, rivers and caves. His book *Karst* has become the text book on cave development and the formation of associated landforms. After he 'retired', Jennings could still be seen scrambling up mountains in New Zealand, walking across

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Joe Jennings. Stephen Bunton collection

Coleman Plain, down through Bungonia Gorge, around Wombeyan caves reserve, or at Yarrangobilly. He was a cheerful person with a great depth of character and an enormous store of knowledge on numerous subjects. Finding the cavers' language inadequate, he invented new terms accepted world-wide.

A keen cross country skier, Jennings died as a result of a heart attack whilst skiing. He would have thought it a most fitting way to go. Some of his first research work in Australia was on the cirques of the Mt Kosciusko region. I will think of him as I ski past Mt Twynam and Little Twynam where he once told me that the snow builds up to a thickness of 30 metres. On 25 August 1984 Joe Jennings' quaint Yorkshire accent sadly faded into the scenery he loved so much. Many will miss him.

Stephen Bunton

• **Murray Valley Parks.** The Lands Conservation Council of Victoria has proposed the establishment of State parks in the Barham and Terrick Terrick Forest and the extension of the Warby Range State Park. It has also proposed the establishment of a reserve along the Murray River to protect the Riverina landscape. River red gum forests are a feature of these areas. The public was invited to make written submissions on the report.

• **Alpine National Park.** The Victorian Government announced in August that Victoria would have a single alpine National Park which would link up with Kosciusko National Park in New South Wales. It will link up the existing alpine National Parks and will surround but exclude the four existing or proposed ski resorts in the area. The area of National Park in the Victorian Alps will increase from 324,000 to almost 600,000 hectares and the habitats of rare animals, such as the mountain pygmy possum, will be protected. However, cattle grazing, logging and mineral exploration will be allowed to continue!

• **Extinction.** The Conservation Council of Victoria has been quoted in *The Age* newspaper as saying that of the 70 or so species of native land mammals still surviving in Victoria, almost a quarter are under threat of extinction. Twenty-five of the 390 Victorian native bird species are said to be endangered. More than 500 species

of flowering plants and ferns in Victoria face possible extinction.

• **Alpine Resort.** The proposed all-season alpine resort to be built on Mt Stirling in north-east Victoria has been approved in principle by the Victorian Government and should be completed in about ten years at a cost of some \$100 million. The project includes the creation of about 50 kilometres of tracks to cater for up to 2,500 Nordic skiers. Hotel and conference facilities are also envisaged.

• **Dredging the Bottom.** The Ovens River in north-east Victoria was dredged for gold in the 1940s and the 1950s. Although these operations ceased almost 30 years ago, the scars they left on the landscape are still very much in evidence.

A small but concerned group of local residents fears that these destructive operations may be about to recommence near the picturesque town of Harrietville.

Concern was aroused last year when a large mining company gave notice that it had applied for permission to carry out exploratory drilling for minerals of interest. The company has since commenced drilling. Residents have objected to proposals that this drilling be extended to private land because they are adamant that dredging must never again be allowed in the Ovens valley and regard drilling as a first step towards dredging. In particular, they fear that areas untouched in the past will be affected — such as beautiful Stony Creek at the foot of Mt Featherston's North-west Spur Track.

Readers wishing to assist the local residents in their fight should write to Mr Jock Ferguson, c/- Post Office, Harrietville, Victoria 3741, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope if more information is required.

• **Paddle Stars.** All but one crew of Australia's canoeing team reached the finals at the Los Angeles Olympic Games. Barry Kelly and Grant Kenny won a bronze medal in the men's 1,000 metres K2 event and Peter Genders, interviewed in *Wild* no 6, came fifth in the men's 1,000 metres K1 event. New Zealand won no less than four gold medals in canoeing.

• **New Course.** A full-time, Technical Year 12 course in Environmental and Outdoor Education, accredited by the Victorian Education Department, is being introduced by Boronia Technical School in 1985. The course has been described by those introducing it as a major development in this important area of education.

• **Merger.** In a major shake-up of the industry, adventure travel operators Peregrine Expeditions, Wilderness Expeditions and Wildtrek have joined forces, but it is understood that the three separate names will be retained, possibly to distinguish different types of operations.

• **Trapping Dolphins.** Conservationists have opposed a company's plans to catch and display 11 bottlenose dolphins in a proposed \$18 million marine park in Melbourne.

• **Grampians.** In July the Victorian National Parks Service released *Grampians National Park: Inventory of Resources and Uses*. A draft management plan for the area is now in preparation.

The Shire of Stawell, which administers the region which includes the township of Halls Gap near the National Park, has instructed local landowners to clear their properties of ti-tree



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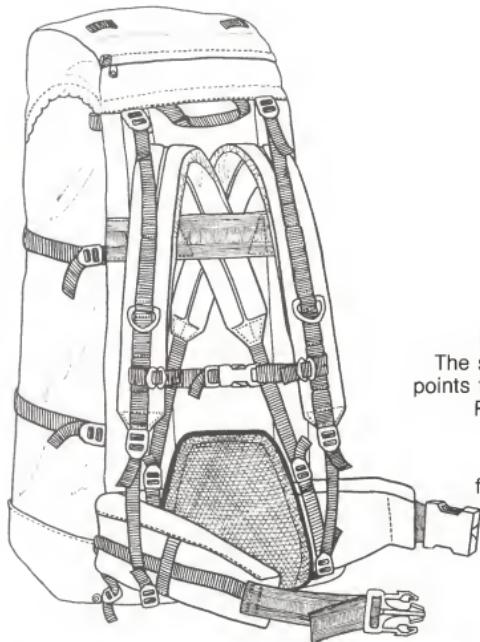
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and other varieties of native flora for 'fire prevention' reasons. In attempting to justify this course it advised landowners that 'the National Park is very close, and surely the best place for bush is in the Park!'

• **Publishing Peaks.** Les Southwell has received two awards from the Australian Book Publishers Association for his book *The Mountains of Paradise*. The awards recognize outstanding design and production in this book on South-west Tasmania. (See review in *Wild no 12*.)

• **Tasmanian Forest Action.** Following the report in *Wild no 14*, Tasmania's Forest Action Network is calling on readers to write to the Federal Government Minister for Primary Industry, Mr J Kerin, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600, to express concern for Tasmania's forests or to FAN (see *Wild no 13*) for up-to-date information.

The future of Tasmania's woodchip industry is under review by the Federal Government. All three of the wood pulp export licences expire in 1988 and a major environmental impact study is being undertaken on whether to renew them. The Federal Government has the power to stop the export of woodchips.

• **Cradle Logging.** Late last summer work began on a logging road into the Lemontynne State Forest, a proposed extension to the Cradle Mountain National Park.

The road was extended by seven kilometres into the recently gazetted Lemontynne State Forest and by the end of 1984 the initial logging will be well under way. The road will also be extended a further seven kilometres this summer, with logging to begin in that area in late 1985.

While the Lemontynne area is subject to the Federal Government's Environment Impact Statement into the Tasmanian woodchip industry, it has no powers to prevent saw-logging activities. All woodchipping in the area has been prevented until the finalization of the statement and the woodchip licence conditions are determined.

The Tasmanian Forestry Commission argues that the logging operations, which in one place will be only three kilometres from the main walking track through Cradle Mountain National Park, will be 'screened' from view. However it reportedly does not deny that there will be noise pollution and an increased risk of fire.

Despite the fact that the initial phases of the logging are proceeding, it is possible that the area will be spared from woodchipping by the Federal Government specifying that it must be left alone. However any chance of the area being saved from saw-logging will rest with the State Government between now and the completion of the first round of logging in the area in ten years.

BB

• **Rainforest Ramblers.** This summer the Wilderness Society is running relaxing day-trips each Wednesday to Tasmania's southern forests — mossy temperate rainforest, magnificent eucalypt forest and Huon pines in the Huon-Weld-Picton areas. The trips will feature spectacular views of western Tasmania's well-known peaks and some of Tasmania's most picturesque rivers and are accompanied by naturalists or botanists. Little walking is involved and all are welcome. Phone (002) 34 9370 for further information.

• **Wilderness Activities.** The Wilderness Society has also been particularly active in

other areas designed to encourage participation in, and appreciation of, Tasmanian wilderness by a wide cross-section of the population.

It has published *World Heritage: Map and Notes from Ouse to Queenstown* which is an attractive colour brochure highlighting the areas of interest, particularly the World Heritage area, near the Lyell Highway. As well as explaining key features of this scenic drive, it describes some short walks. It is available from Tasmanian Tourist Bureau and Wilderness Society shops throughout Australia.

The society is also preparing an Access Guide to *Natural Tasmania* for the elderly, handicapped people, and people with young children — or anyone who doesn't want a strenuous bushwalk. Basically a tourist guide, it will concentrate on natural history and focus on natural experiences that can be enjoyed from a car or a short distance from one.

• **Update for Franklin River Paddlers.** The \$50 charge on Franklin River paddlers, which was introduced in 1983, is under review by the Tasmanian Government.

National Parks and Wildlife Service Rangers will again be stationed at the start of the trip (Collingwood River bridge) and close to the confluence of the Franklin and Gordon Rivers (at Sir John Falls).

The good news is that the NPWS has made the Thunderush portage track (in the Great Ravine) easier and safer. This high portage track, which usually takes six to seven hours for the average party, is always difficult, and in places dangerous.

There are now ladders, ropes and hand-rails in various sections. This has made the start of the track much safer (particularly at high water levels) and the infamous 'chimney' is now bypassed.

The Wilderness Society's rafting notes for the Franklin are an excellent source of information for anyone contemplating rafting or canoeing the Franklin this summer.

Yvonne McLaughlin

• **A Pub Instead of a Dam?** Conservationists are concerned that the Tasmanian Government is considering a proposal to build a 52-bed hotel at Sir John Falls on the lower Gordon River. Whilst it would certainly be a key attraction for tourists on Tasmania's west coast, and would make it more difficult for any future government to proceed with the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme, conservationists consider it would be a major intrusion into the area. As an alternative, the Wilderness Society has proposed that such facilities be provided at Strahan or Kelly Basin.

• **Dam Mania.** The decision by the Federal Government to grant compensation money to the Tasmanian Government for the construction of the King and Henty-Anthon River power schemes has sealed the fate of two more wild areas in South-west Tasmania, conservationists claim.

So far, most of the construction work has occurred on the King River scheme, with the construction of the road up the King River Gorge underway and blasting for the foundations at the mouth of the gorge. Construction work on the Henty-Anthon scheme has been concentrated on the first seven dams in the scheme. For both areas, this summer will be the last chance to see them in a relatively undamaged state. (The Wilderness Society, in conjunction with Wilderness Expeditions, will be running a commercial trip to the Henty-Anthon area this summer.)

Following the announcement of the compensation deal, the Wilderness Society and

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a number of conservation groups have taken legal advice on possible challenges to apparent breaches of the Australian Heritage Commission Act by the Federal Government. Legal action would be aimed at preventing the Federal Government allocating funds for schemes which adversely affect areas listed on the National Estate and, in the case of the King Scheme, a section of the World Heritage area.

BB

• **Park Proposal.** The main conservation groups in Tasmania have released a proposal for a major National Park on Tasmania's east coast. The proposed Douglas and Apsley Rivers National Park is intended to preserve the last significant stand of undamaged dry forest in Tasmania and protect several rare and endangered plant and animal species.

The State Government has declared that the coal reserves which underlie part of the area must not be 'locked up', but exploited. The timber company, Associated Pulp and Paper Mills, is wary of seeing a portion of its massive forest concession further withdrawn because of the precedent that action would set rather than an account of the size of the resource that would be lost to the company. As much of the area is uneconomic for logging, it is likely that a Forestry Commission Reserve will be declared, but conservationists suspect that it will not be large enough to ensure the survival of the area's flora and fauna.

The construction of a logging road into the adjacent Apsley River valley has been halted temporarily while studies on the effects of logging on water quality are completed. This delay was in response to concern expressed by a number of local residents. The Forestry Commission plans to extend the road into the Douglas River catchment in the next few years to enable logging well within the area proposed as a National Park.

Both the Forestry Commission and APPM are increasingly wary of taking any action which might aggravate the growing concerns of many local residents and organizations wishing to see the area declared a National Park. While the future of the area hangs in the balance, conservationists believe there is a good chance that the growing local support for the proposal will see the area saved.

BB

• **Pedal Power.** Each summer many *Wild* readers head to Tasmania for inexpensive bushwalking and touring holidays. These people may be interested to know that Rent-A-Cycle, which can be contacted through the Launceston Youth Hostel, has touring bicycles and lightweight camping gear for hire.

• **Mining in the Flinders.** The South Australian Government will soon decide whether exploration for lead-zinc ore will continue in the Flinders Ranges National Park. If approved this, the third stage of exploration on behalf of BHP, will involve drilling near the Heysen Range just north of Wilpena Pound. Such a drilling operation would require the creation of damaging access roads and drill sites, and would also pose the very serious threat of mining within the park.

In the light of the Government's recent decision to grant a Petroleum Exploration Licence for seismic surveys in the Arrowie Basin, a Class A Environmental Zone adjacent to the ranges, there are real fears for further intrusions in the areas designated parks.

The Flinders Ranges Action Committee is conducting a campaign opposing the proposed exploration. Its address is 120 Wakefield Street,

Adelaide, South Australia 5000.

Quentin Chester

• **Gibson Desert.** The expedition reported in *Wild* no 13 successfully traversed Western Australia's Gibson Desert from west to east, generally just north of the route taken by the explorer Ernest Giles in 1876. The 1,000 kilometre trip took 40 days, two members of the party walking the entire distance. (The others took camel rides for part of each day.) No water was encountered during the last 24 days of the crossing, which is believed to be the first since Giles and was clearly a major exploratory journey. The expedition found that introduced fauna — feral cats, camels, and, to a lesser extent, rabbits and foxes — have penetrated right to the heart of this desert wilderness.

• **New Book.** A bushwalking book featuring the forests and woodlands of Western Australia is being prepared by the Campaign to Save Native Forests. Two people have been employed full-time to research and write the book.

Forests featured will include the die-back threatened jarrah forest, the bauxite mining threatened Wandoan Woodland and the woodchip threatened karri forest. These forest types comprise a great percentage of Western Australia's remaining forests — hence the dire need for a book to educate the public on these magnificent forests.

Chris Radек/

• **Mine, Mine, Mine.** Bauxite mining is continuing in, and slowly destroying, the northern jarrah forest of the Darling Scarp east of Perth.

Bauxite mining and associated works are removing the jarrah forest from a large section of the scarp. But the grave threat at present is the association of the deadly fungal killer, jarrah die-back, with bauxite mining. Conservative estimates by foresters place the incidence of die-back infection at three hectares for each hectare mined — a staggering rate of destruction of a unique ecosystem.

Conservationists consider that the bauxite mining companies involved have acknowledged their destruction of the jarrah forest ecosystem through their stated policy of landscaping their open-cut pits with species exotic to the area.

A proposed aluminium smelter, to be sited in the jarrah forest near Collie, will increase the environmental destruction of the bauxite/alumina industry. The Western Australian Government has supported the establishment of this smelter. It apparently sees the smelter as a 'sponge' for the absorption of a massive over-commitment to natural gas by the State Energy Commission. This gas is to be sold at a fraction of the production cost — subsidized by other energy users.

Conservationists see the establishment of this smelter as a further commitment to bauxite mining and its dire ecological consequences. It will also mean the State has one of the world's highest concentrations of aluminium-oriented industries and that Western Australia's economy can be seriously affected by world aluminium prices (which fell steadily in 1984).

For further information contact the Campaign to Save Native Forests, 794 Hay Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000.

CR

• **Nullarbor Discoveries.** One of the most significant cave discoveries of recent times was made on the Nullarbor Plain by students of Narrabundah College, Canberra. An 11-man expedition, led by Neil Montgomery during the August-September 1984 school holidays,

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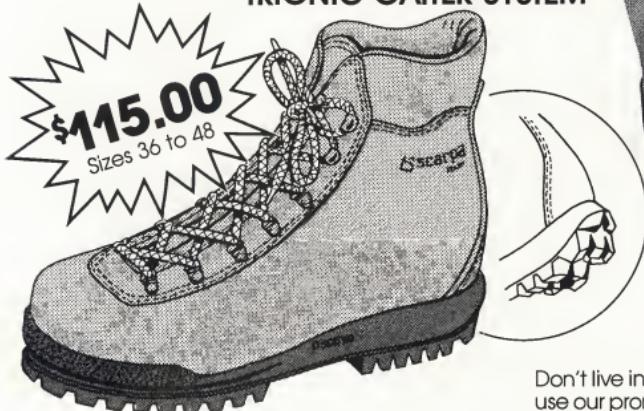
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succeeded in 'extending' Old Homestead Cave by over two kilometres. This cave is on the northern section of the plain about 80 kilometres from the Western Australian coast. Old Homestead Cave is now the first long cave on this section of the plain which was formerly thought to be devoid of significant caves. This makes the discovery one of great geological importance.

Like most major cave discoveries, this one was stumbled upon almost by accident. A curious Paul Bilston removed a few rocks from a narrow rift and was subsequently able to squeeze through into a spacious new passage. Only a kilometre of the new system was surveyed and this exploration failed to investigate any of the 50 or so side passages noted.

Old Homestead Cave now rates as one of the most exciting exploration prospects in Australia. The only problem facing further exploration is the difficulty of mounting expeditions to such a remote corner of the continent.

SB

• **Lowe Pro.** President of Lowe Alpine Systems, Greg Lowe, recently visited Australia. During his brief visit this prominent American mountaineer and film-maker showed three of his films — extreme skiing on the Grand Teton (USA), climbing on Longs Peak and a short film on women climbers.

• **New Zealand Caving.** The Southern hemisphere's two deepest caves are Nettlebed (which is also the longest) and HH at Mt Arthur in Nelson, New Zealand. In 1983 and 1984 several expeditions were made to each cave, resulting in further extensions. (See report in *Wild* no 14.)

The depth (or rather height, since the cave is entered at the bottom) of Nettlebed was increased to 690 metres during a climb at Easter 1984, but most activity was at HH, which has the potential to connect to Nettlebed with a through trip of over 900 metres, and a potential depth of about 750 metres before the water table is reached.

In the 1982-83 summer the depth of HH was pushed to 558 metres, with the trip terminated at a very narrow stream passage. On the first trip of the 1983-84 summer, led by Fred Kahl and Mick Hopkinson, the passage was blasted to enlarge it, but the party was caught by high water on the way out and spent 36 hours waiting for the water to recede.

On the third trip Mick Hopkinson crawled through the blasted stream passage, but lacked support to push further. Later Mick, with Ian Whitehouse, Gillian Wrat, Lindsay Main, and Joe Arts penetrated this passage and descended a further five short pitches to reach a second constricted passage, extending the depth by about 60 metres. Two subsequent trips led by Fred Kahl failed to pass the blasted passage because of high water.

Even with the ropes rigged in place, an expedition to the bottom of HH is a serious undertaking, with 19 pitches to descend and ascend, requiring about 24 hours underground.

Lindsay Main

• **New Hut.** Pioneer Hut in New Zealand's Westland National Park has been rebuilt at a cost of \$NZ50,000. The original hut was removed in 1983 because its foundations were unstable.

• **Alpine Rescue Techniques.** This is the title of a recently published book by New Zealand mountain rescue expert Don Bogie. It can be obtained for \$NZ7.95 (\$NZ4.80 each for four or

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• **New Walkway.** The New Zealand Walkway Commission has opened its hundredth walkway, from Bethells Beach to Muriwai, a section of the Te Henga Goldie Bush Track giving access to some of the most dramatic coastal scenery in New Zealand.

• **Caving Expedition to Mexico.** In February-April 1985, six Australians will be searching for the world's deepest cave. Mexico is ideally suited to the formation of deep caves. It has plenty of limestone, high geographical relief and heavy seasonal rainfall. The many Mexican caving areas have attracted much attention from American expeditions but relatively few from cavers of other nations.

The main problems facing Australian cavers wishing to explore in Mexico is its distance from Australia and the language.

The expedition plans to investigate two areas near Huatla which currently boasts the world's third deepest cave — Sistema Huatla (1,246 metres deep). The plateau of Cerro Rabon has a potential for caves of over 2,000 metres and an area near Zozulitan has potential for caves of up to 2,500 metres deep. (The deepest known cave in the world is Reseau Jean Bernard, France, 1,470 metres.) Both these Mexican areas have not yet been visited by speleologists, mainly because of the warnings given by the locals, that the jungle is inhabited by 'el Tigre' (the jaguar).

Exploration of caves situated in dense rainforest is nothing new to Australian cavers who have survived the rigours of numerous expeditions to the highlands of Papua-New Guinea where they have found many exceptional caves. The expedition is being organized by Alan Warild and Stephen Bunton. It will leave Sydney in early January.

SB

• **Continental Cave Capers.** Several Australian cavers are planning to visit Europe in 1985, despite the cancellation of the International Union of Speleology Conference in Spain. (Reported in *Wild* no 14.) The group intends to visit the best continental caving areas including the Sierra Nevada, Picos de Europa, the French and Italian Alps and Yugoslavia. One of its objectives is to tackle as many of the kilometre-deep classics as possible. Like 8,000 metre mountains, there are only 14 in the world. This trip is also being planned by Alan Warild and Stephen Bunton and is scheduled to begin in late July.

SB

• **World's Longest Cave.** Recent discoveries in the Flint Ridge-Mammoth Cave System, Kentucky, USA, have connected it with neighbouring Ropelle Cave. With the extra 76 kilometres of passage in Ropelle Cave added to the system, it takes the total length of the Mammoth Cave System to 480 kilometres. Australia's longest cave is Exit Cave, Tasmania, with only 17 kilometres of passage explored.

• **Corrections.** The Mont advertisement in *Wild* no 14 should have included the company's new address and phone number: PO Box 995, Queanbeyan, New South Wales 2620. Phone (062) 97 1645. The Sheer Height advertisement in the same issue included an incorrect phone number. The second one should have been (03) 669 3248. Canoe & Camping Supplies' new phone number is (02) 817 5590.

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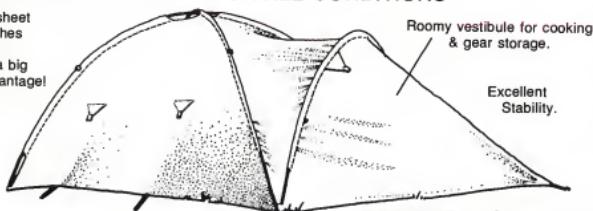
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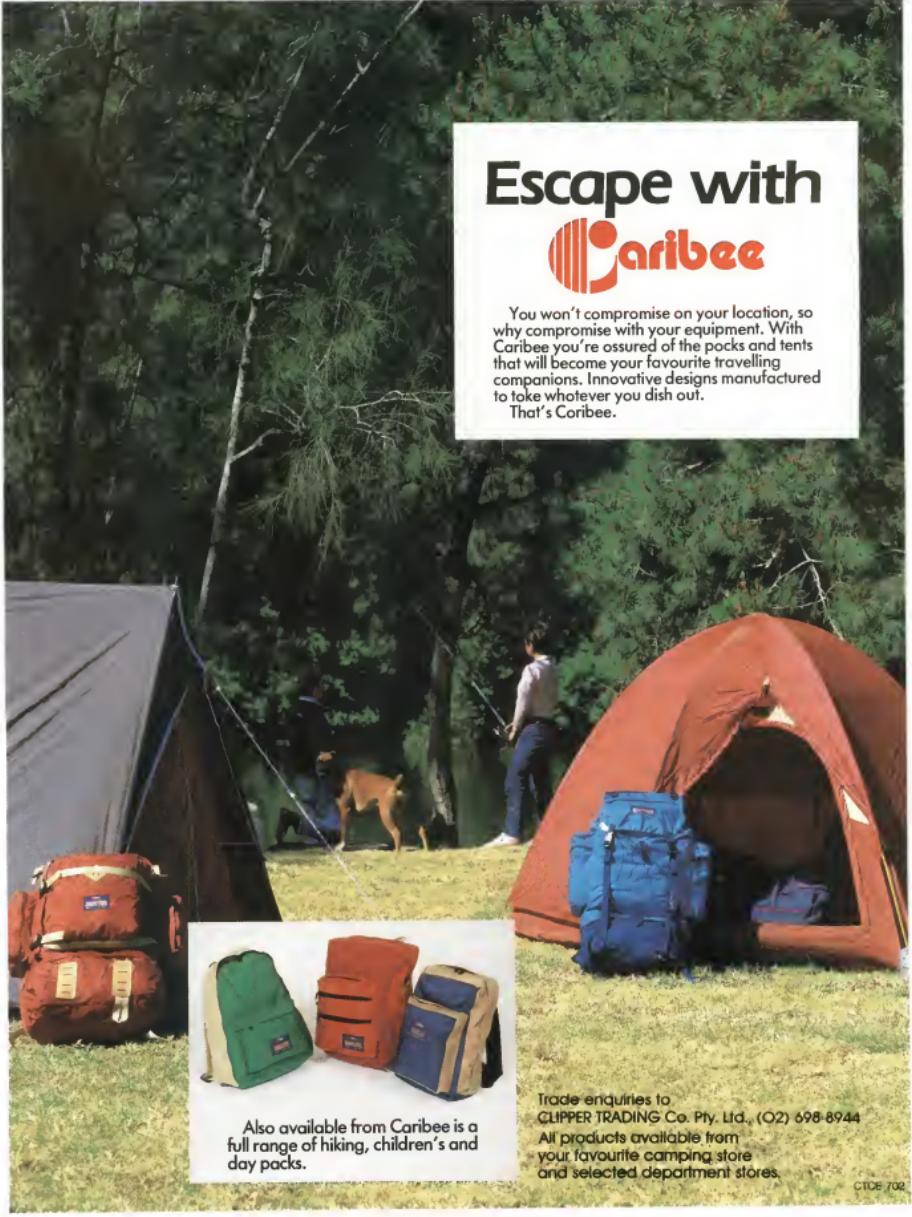
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# Getting Started

## Paddle Your Own Canoe

Yvonne McLaughlin



Fun in the foam! Chris McLaughlin

• CANOEING — THE WORD CONJURES UP various visions; from gentle paddling on a tranquil lake, drifting down a lazy river, the excitement of shooting rapids ... The nice thing about canoeing is that you can do it all year round. You can combine it with camping. (Having gear in your boat is much easier than on your back!) Anyone, providing they can swim, can go canoeing!

The best, and cheapest, way to find out what canoeing is about is to hire a boat and take some lessons. Starting with a borrowed boat and the help of an experienced canoeing friend sounds all right but may lead to the adoption of bad techniques which are later difficult to correct. Also it's more fun to learn in a group. You get to try out different boats, which gives you some ideas when you come to buy your own. And you learn from the mistakes made by other people in the group.

The Australian Canoe Federation has a Canoeing Award Scheme, and there is a Board of Canoe Education in each State. Most of these regularly run a variety of canoeing courses. For further details contact your State Department of Sport/Recreation. Some canoe clubs give informal teaching sessions which are a good introduction to the sport. Contact your State Canoe Association for a list of clubs.

To see what boats and equipment are

available, and to browse through some canoeing literature, it is worth visiting some of the canoe shops. *The Yellow Pages* has a comprehensive list under 'Boats'. Most canoe shops also have a hiring section.

At this stage you must decide if you want to paddle a single or double boat. The most common boats in Australia are the double canoes, both open and decked, and the single, decked kayak.

The difference between a kayak and a canoe is that you sit in a kayak and use a double-bladed paddle; you can sit or kneel in a canoe, and you use a single-blade paddle.

**When and where to go.** It really doesn't matter when you start. Canoeing courses are offered throughout the year, so it is up to you to choose a suitable time. The summer tends to be most popular, with its warmer days and lighter evenings.

It is best to start on a flat section of a nearby river, or lake, to get a feel of the boat before you take on moving water.

**Equipment.** If you are hiring equipment from a reputable organization you will get a boat in good condition, with fixed buoyancy (so that the boat will float even when full of water), hand holds on each end, and no rough edges round



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the cockpit. With the boat you will get a buoyancy vest or a life jacket, and one or two paddles.

In choosing equipment, discuss with the canoe shop staff what you plan to do, what type of water you expect to paddle on, and they will be able to advise you.

There is a wide variety of boats available. The high-buoyancy kayaks are designed for bigger people and/or carrying more gear. They also tend to give a steadier ride in big waves/bouncy water. Some boats are designed for flat water, some for white water, and there are also sea kayaks. Low-buoyancy boats are more manoeuvrable, and are not so suitable for beginners. There is a variety of seat designs to accommodate just about every size of behind!

Double canoes can be the traditional 16 foot open Canadian design, or decked with two or three cockpits (the middle cockpit helps when storing gear). Again there are designs for flat water and for white water.

Most boats are made from fibreglass, although some traditional open Canadians are made of timber. Plastic boats, both kayaks and canoes, are just beginning to appear in Australia. They are very popular in the USA, and are gaining in popularity here, mainly because of ease of maintenance.

Paddles come in various grades of quality, from plastic to timber. The appropriate size depends on your height.

A good buoyancy vest or life jacket is essential. A buoyancy vest will simply keep you afloat, whereas a life jacket, with its bulky collar, is designed to keep you afloat with your face out of the water. A vest or jacket with a zip or clips is more comfortable than the old fashioned 'Mae West' type, which slips over the head and is tied with tapes round the waist.

A helmet is important when you start paddling rivers containing any sort of obstruction, such as rocks or trees. They are usually plastic or fibreglass, and most importantly, have holes in them (to allow water to drain out). Old motorcycle helmets will not do!

**Accessories.** In canoeing, as in any sport, there is always equipment you would like to have once you get past the beginner stage.

A spray-deck (a neoprene or plastic 'apron' that fits over the cockpit) is useful once you start paddling on bouncy water. These always have a quick-release loop.

A wet suit is good value for winter canoeing. Wet boots, made of neoprene, with a good grip sole, keep your feet much warmer than sandals. A windproof jacket, or cagoule, with neoprene cuffs, and an adjustable neck fastening, helps to keep you dry and comfortable.

There are several 'goodies' you can buy from canoe shops which make life easier or more comfortable. Some popular ones are: plastic waterproof containers for carrying your lunch, plastic barrels for carrying gear in double boats, waterproof bags for carrying clothes and spare kayak paddles which break down to fit into a kayak.

Always wear clothes appropriate to the season when canoeing. Apart from the mandatory buoyancy vest or life jacket and suitable footwear, in summer the emphasis is on protection from the sun. In winter, dress warmly. Woolen clothes are best as they keep you relatively warm even when wet.

At all times beware of the deadly combination of wind, water and cold, as hypothermia (exposure) is a real danger to canoeists.

**Touring.** Afternoon or day trips are a good way to start. Week-end or extended tours are for more experienced paddlers. Choose an appropriate venue, not too far away, with easy water to start.

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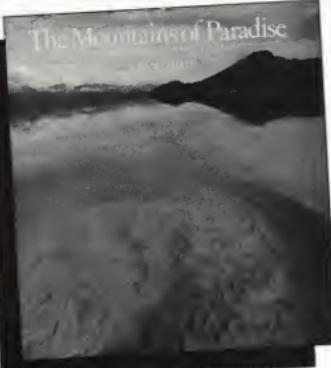
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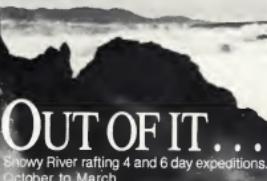
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Departure Dates	6-11	7-12	13-18	14-19	1-6
	22-27	24-1 M.	29-3 A.		19-24
				26-2 J	
Departure Dates	6-9	7-10	2-5	4-7	2-5
	16-19	14-17	7-10	11-14	9-12
	21-24	21-24	14-17	18-21	16-19
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Some States have a canoeing guide to their rivers (available from canoe shops) and these are a mine of information. Descriptions of the river, the degree of difficulty, access points and so on are all covered. Four people is the minimum-sized group, and an important rule is to never paddle alone.

The car 'shuffle' has to be organized first — to ensure that you have transport at the finish of your trip — unless you are lucky enough to have a non-paddler with you who will meet you at the end of your trip.

**What to take.** As well as your basic equipment, and being appropriately dressed for the weather, when on a day tour you should also carry the following (in a waterproof container): energy food, such as chocolate, nuts or dried fruit; plus a good lunch if it is a full day trip; small first aid kit (including sun screen); and a spare woolen pullover.

There should be at least one roll of repair tape and a spare paddle in the group. Depending on the trip, a rope (about ten metres long and seven millimetres thick) and a map of the area can be added. All these items can be shared out among the group.

Before going on a day tour, leave details of your trip with a responsible person, and tell them what to do if you haven't returned by a given time.

Always keep your trips well within the ability of the group, and have a keen regard to safety. Travel at the speed of the slowest member of the group.

You learn so much more about canoeing, and get more enjoyment, if you take your time, 'play' on interesting stretches of water, and enjoy all that the river and area has to offer.

Once you master the basic strokes, your skills and technique will quickly improve. As well as getting increased enjoyment from paddling, your choice of canoeing venues will dramatically increase.

There are some very good books available on canoeing. I recommend *Living Canoeing* by Alan Byrne (British), *This is Canoeing* by J & R Farrance (Australian), and *Basic River Canoeing* by RE McNair (American).

Once you get the canoeing 'bug', weather maps, rainfall levels, and water generally, become much more interesting! •

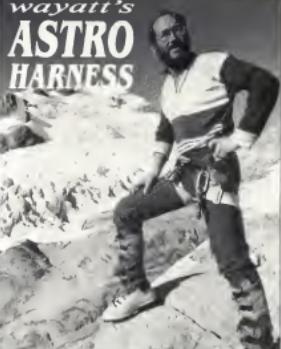
#### State Canoe Associations and their Boards of Canoe Education

**New South Wales Canoe Association**, Secretary Cathie Holland, Sports House 157-161 Gloucester Street Sydney NSW 2000, (02) 241 3866. **NSW Board of Canoe Education**, Helen Brownlie, 5/14 Pearson Street Gladesville NSW 2111, (02) 560 3022. **South Australian Canoeing Association**, Secretary Peter Carter, 28 Rowells Road Lockleys SA 5032, (08) 4298. **SA Board of Canoe Education**, Mike Taylor, 70 Oakridge Rise Hackham 5163, (08) 382 3273.

**Tasmanian Canoe Association**, Secretary Andrew Rust, 34 Water Street Ulverstone Tas 7215, (004) 25 4284. **Tas Board of Canoe Education**, Jim Wilde, Upper McEwan Road Legana Tas 7251, (003) 30 1639. **Queensland Amateur Canoe Federation**, Secretary Lesley Turner, 24 Mahonia Street Wishart Old 4122, (07) 343 2546. **Qld Board of Canoe Education**, Ron Farquharson, 12 Margaret Street Alexandra Hills Qld 4151, (07) 207 2961. **Victorian Amateur Canoe Association**, Assistant Secretary Jill Prior, 1 Byrne Court Cheltenham Vic 3192, (03) 583 4860. **Vic Board of Canoe Education**, Cary Pedicini, c/- 140 Cotham Road Kew Vic 3101, (03) 80 6030. **Western Australian Amateur Canoe Association**, Secretary Harry Snowball, 20 Stringybark Ramble Willerton WA 6155. **WA Board of Canoe Education**, Serge Giannatti, 57 Woodhall Street Stirling WA 6021. **Australian Canoe Federation**, Secretary Joann Morrison, 217 Oyster Bay Road Coffs NSW 2226, (02) 528 7141.

Yvonne McLaughlin (see Contributors in Wild no 7) is Wild's contributing editor for canoeing. She has been paddling for eight years and is an instructor with the Victorian Board of Canoe Education.

## wayatt's ASTRO HARNESS



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## NEW IMPROVED VALVES AND STRONGER FABRICS

# Contributors

**John Bally**, 27, has spent most of his adult life at Monash University studying physics and environmental science. Constant student poverty encouraged him to start making outdoor gear for his own use and for pocket money. He has walked, skied and kayaked extensively with the Monash Bushwalking Club. After leaving university John worked part-time at Nordic Ski & Backpacking in the Melbourne suburb of Murrumbeena and is now a meteorologist with the Melbourne weather bureau.

**Neil Blundy** has been carting rucksacks around the mountains of Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales and New Zealand for 12 years and particularly enjoys extended walks in remote areas. He is also a keen cross country

which are now assembled to augment an income from casual work for the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Sydney bushwalking shop Mountain Equipment.

Ian has just completed a diploma course in Environmental Studies and he now hopes to become more fully involved with the activities of wilderness preservation groups.

**Tony Cunneen** has been getting lost in the Australian wilderness for 15 years. For a time he worked as a tour guide in Europe and was able to get lost on a professional basis. He scared himself into becoming suburban while climbing in Wales, England, Norway and Austria, and in Canada when cringing in terror of the bears.

Tony has written (and had published) 'pages of nonsense' in England and Australia, and an interest in obscurity has led him to becoming passionate about minor explorers. These days he teaches at Chatswood.

**Tad Janocinski**, born in Poland, came to Australia in 1980. He became interested in photography as a schoolboy and developed his skill at a Polish university where he graduated in geography and was able to take part in several scientific expeditions to the mountains of Europe and Asia. He then became scenographer to a ballet company, in some of whose performances his photographic slides

were matched with the music as vital parts of the overall presentation.

Tad's nature photography searches for metaphorical reflections of reality, often with close-ups and macro-photography, using a small depth of field or an emphasized blurred background, a style that helps him allude to the unreality of this world. He strives to present in his photographs the convergence of two meanings — an identifiable document of the objective reality and the recording of personal experiences that cover reflections, ways of thinking, impressions and wishes. He believes in the principle of 'pure' photography so uses a rich, but not sophisticated, range of equipment that includes F3 and FM Nikon and lenses from eight to 600 millimetre, preferably wide angle and macro.

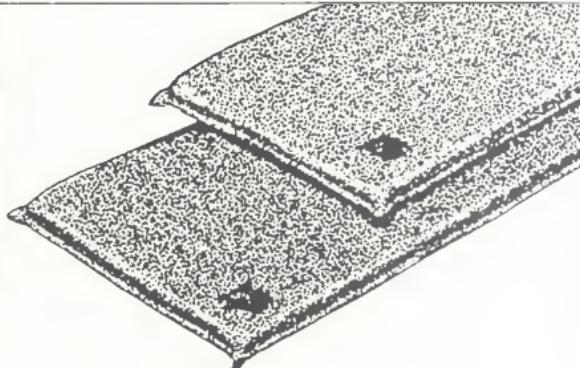
**George Seddon**, who is Director of Environmental Studies at the University of Melbourne, began bushwalking in his 'teens in the Australian Alps, and over the years has been lucky enough to climb many mountains, including Mt Wilhelm in Papua New Guinea, Mt Banahoa in the Philippines, the Sichuan Alps in western China, on the Tibetan border, and in the Sierra Nevada of western USA. He took up white water kayaking in his mid-fifties and has toured most of the rivers of south-eastern Australia, much preferring it to lawn bowling. He is currently writing a book about the Snowy River from source to mouth.



skier and rockclimber, having been introduced to both activities whilst a member of Melbourne University Mountaineering Club.

Neil and his wife Mary own and operate The Wilderness Shop, a specialist gear shop in the Melbourne suburb of Box Hill, but ever-increasing demands of business and the arrival of son David have limited recent outdoor activities. However David, instead of being left to mind the shop, is being trained for more strenuous activities, and has already managed a 'bushwalk' in the Warrumbungle Ranges in New South Wales.

**Ian Charles** was born in 1958 and began bushwalking soon after. A more recent interest in ski touring and rockclimbing led him to start making his own clothing and equipment about five years ago. Work as a guide with Blue Mountains Expeditions in 1981 provided ample opportunity to develop his rucksack designs,



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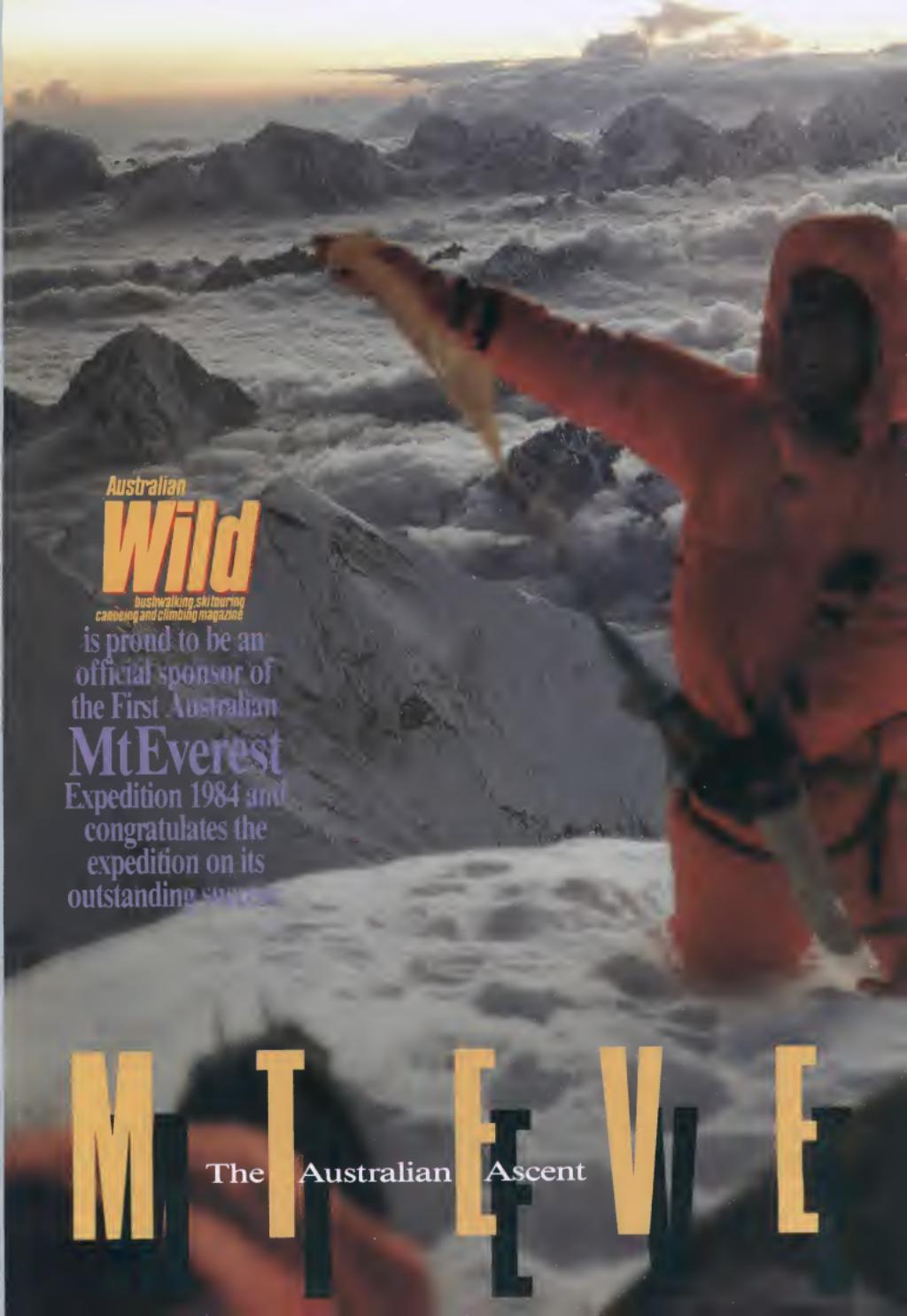
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A dramatic photograph of a mountain climber in an orange jacket and helmet standing on a rocky outcrop. The climber is looking down at a deep, misty valley filled with clouds. In the background, more rugged mountain peaks are visible under a hazy sky.

Australian

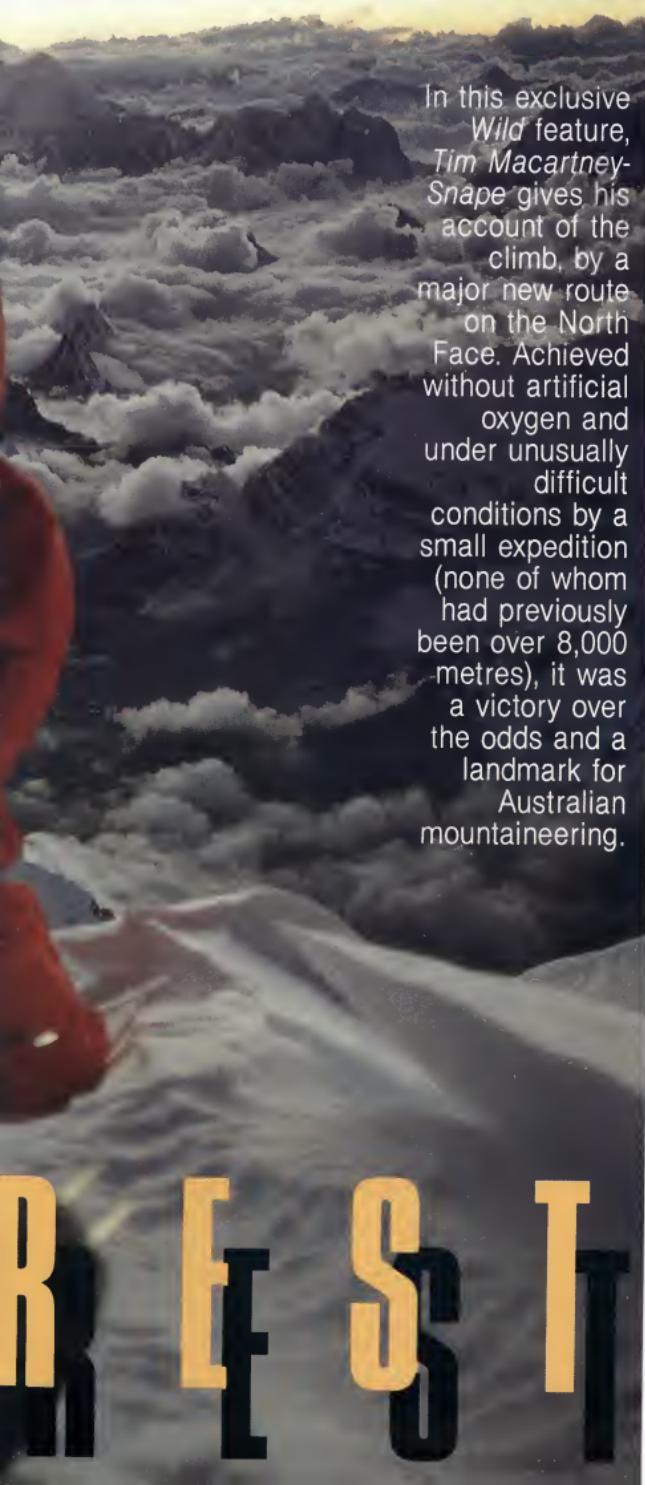
# Wild

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# M T E V E

The Australian Ascent



In this exclusive *Wild* feature, Tim Macartney-Snape gives his account of the climb, by a major new route on the North Face. Achieved without artificial oxygen and under unusually difficult conditions by a small expedition (none of whom had previously been over 8,000 metres), it was a victory over the odds and a landmark for Australian mountaineering.

R E S T

● MY SKIS HISSED SOFTLY AS I SKIED OUT from Qomolangma's (the Tibetan name for Mt Everest) shadow and into the light of an autumn moon. The world of the upper Rongbuk Glacier was tropical by comparison with the world of the North Face, the air, thicker and warmer, brushed against my face like a warm caress.

I was off the mountain, we had done it. And although the others were still on the face I knew that they would come down safely; the mountain was letting us go and I had a feeling of respectful goodwill towards it. During the climb I had not always felt that way.

Behind, the North Face was in shadow, a common condition. In front was the fairytale world of the upper Rongbuk,



bathed in moonlight. Our crevasse-free highway (the highest regular ski run on earth?) dipped down and round the west spur of Changtse to Camp One where Narayan and Tenzing were waiting with hot food and smiling faces.

The moments following a big climb are the purest and sweetest of all. Months of anxiety, pain and discomfort are suddenly over; the monomania which possessed you at the expense of so many valuable thoughts evaporates and the senses it sharpened are let loose to experience the present without any restrictions.

My mind and body felt cleansed, peace was mine; my attention was at last completely free to see where I was. Khumbutse and Lingtren, those exquisite peaks of wind-sculpted ice, glowed against a multitude of stars. Venus shone like a miniature moon and the cusp of the Lhola greeted the Milky Way in a symbolic transition from earth to the stars.

There is an awesome feeling of power surrounding Qomolangma. I think you can sense it as you approach it from any direction, and that night the feeling was strong. The great valleys that drained the mountain came alive in my mind. From the valleys of the Khumbu I could smell juniper, azalea and the dank earth of the rhododendron forests — and Sherpa villages and monasteries so ingeniously and sympathetically suited to their surroundings; the miraculous peaks,

Greg Mortimer, with prayer flags, on the roof of the world and, above, recuperating from snow blindness in precarious 'Camp 1.8': Macartney-Snape



Thamserku, Ama Dablam, Tawcheche, Kangtaiga — it all came clear in my mind. So did the sharply contrasting features of the valley below me. In the lower Rongbuk the earth's skeleton is exposed in all its colours, textures and patterns. During the day the air is so clear, the light so bright and the sky so dark that the rock-strewn landscape jumps up at you, vividly vibrant and alive. These and other images derive from something that is greater than the sum of its parts, something that really gives reverence to the Mother Goddess of the Earth.

The others on the face were constantly in my mind. Lincoln and Greg had made it down to Camp Three, Andy was with Geof at Camp Two. It's only dangerous

## There is an awesome feeling of power surrounding Qomolangma.

'while people are up there', was one of our doctor's profundities, but this time I felt they were safe. The dangers that had been so prevalent lower on the face at the beginning of the climb were gone. Every mountain changes once you have climbed on it, but the change on this one was more than just one of perception.

At the beginning, when the monsoon storms would regularly leave snow lying deep on the face, it was menacingly dynamic. There seemed to be no part of the lower face that was totally immune from avalanches; their power and scale made us comically insignificant.

In retrospect, the end of September and the few days afterwards are quite amusing: at the time their serious side was foremost in our minds.

During our first foray on to the face we had fixed some 600 metres of rope up an alarmingly large and consistently steep snow slope. Unable to find a suitable site for Camp Two, we had dumped some gear at the top of the fixed ropes. In the bergschrund at the bottom of the face there was an ice cave overhung by formidable icicles. There we decided to stash our climbing gear — it would save having to carry it down to the next safe spot a long way down the glacier. We used Nordic skis to the foot of the face so we were able to leave even our climbing boots there. Tut, tut. A monsoon storm ended that first brief foray and we made the first

*Top left, Lincoln Hall ascending a fixed rope low on the North Face. Left, Andy Henderson, bottom, Greg Mortimer and Tim Macartney-Snape in the Great Coulolr, above Camp Three. Right, Henderson and Hall at 7,600 metres in the Great Coulolr.*



of many retreats to the preferable ambience of Advance Base Camp, where the highest plants of the Rongbuk Glacier grew and probably the highest lawn in the world.

Some of us returned to the bottom of the face on 2 September. Bits and pieces of gear from the top of the ropes were lying on an uncomfortably large amount of avalanche debris. The top rope was also sticking out from the jumbled blocks. The avalanche had missed our stash in the bergschrund and it appeared that nothing had changed much but, on searching and digging a metre or so, nothing could be found.

Except for Simon, our intrepid journalist, who was busy despatching a story, all of us, four film crew, two Nepalis and five climbers, went up the next day to dig for our titanium axes, lightweight crampons, climbing boots, helmets, ascenders, harnesses and hardware. The sun was hot, and as it got hotter and the hole bigger, our hopes diminished. For six hours we dug and poked — it was hard labour at 6,200 metres. Jim tried divining for it, using some aluminium pack staves, but the unbelievers cast so much doubt on the attempt that it could not work, and in the

evening we went home with empty and blistered hands.

A lot of the gear was dear to us. Its loss was a difficult reality to face up to, but we began to realize that most of us could make do with gear borrowed from the film crew, harnesses could be improvised, and that less hardware made for a cleaner ascent. The only problem was my feet, because no one else had feet as large as mine. Luckily Greg came up with some overboots that fitted over my Asolo Nordic double boots, and I discovered that Footfangs, those rigid and very solid crampons, fitted them perfectly. I still wondered whether I could escape frostbite. We had at least come closer to our ideal of being a lightweight expedition.

The face was still in its dynamic stage, and we desperately needed the psychological and practical boost of a 'bomb-proof' site for Camp Two.

The bottom section of our route was steeper and more dangerous than we had expected. The Americans had considered it during their attempt in 1982 but decided it was too difficult. Some of them were back this year to attempt the North Ridge, and I had gone down to their Base Camp to glean any information from them. Jim

Wickwire, one of their leading climbers, was extremely forthcoming with the considerable knowledge he possessed, and was sufficiently impressed to describe our projected route as a Yugoslav or Czech route. In Himalayan terms that is quite a compliment.

After some hard and worrying climbing, the Camp Two of our dreams was finally found. The crux pitch, a steep ice-encrusted corner of rotten rock, had been climbed by Greg (again!) after a harrowing night he and Geoff had spent at 1.8, a very temporary 'camp' established as a stepping stone to Camp Two. Their small tent, which teetered on an even smaller ledge, was flattened by constant spindrift avalanches.

Camp Two was different. Its invulnerability to even the biggest avalanche had been witnessed by Lincoln who had just begun to dig the snow cave entrance. Greg and I were bringing loads from 1.8 up the ropes when it happened.

It caught me completely unawares. High on the face a dull roar had attracted my attention and I saw a kilometre-wide explosion of billowing snow. I just saw it shoot over the 200 metre ice cliff in the Great Couloir, making it shrink in comparison, before it was upon me with a force that meant business. A hurricane-force wind blasted fine snow at me and I winced in expectation of a bone-breaking larger particle but it never came. After the longest 30 seconds of my life I was snap frozen and the pummeling ended.

The mist settled; I yelled to Greg, 'Are you OK?'

'Yeah, I think so. Are you?'

'I think so...'

From then on we avoided climbing later than mid-morning.

Above Camp Two, there was white limbo, a hideously unnerving stretch of low-angled snow. We ran out of rope there,

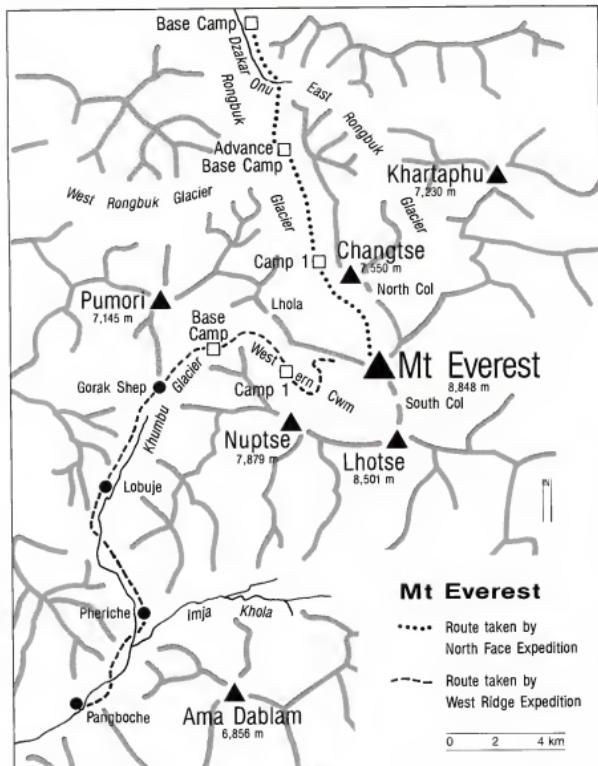
## A kilometre-wide explosion of billowing snow.

and the wind started to blow all the snow away, turning the mountain into something more like what we had expected. It also forced us back to the vegie pots of Advance Base.

We had finished the fixing, it was time to recuperate and start psyching ourselves for the next part, the summit push.

There had been a remarkable change in the weather. The high winds brought dry, cold air, the once-flooded stream at Advance Base stayed frozen all day and plants shrivelled to dust. The cold we had expected all along had finally come.

Then we had visitors who came to stay for a while. The Sino-German glaciological team was a very friendly, interested group of people and they had some amazing



instruments. One gadget measured the temperature of distant objects, so they were able to tell us the temperature on the mountain. It was not very encouraging.

It was better when they were able to settle an argument that threatened to mar the good karma of an expedition that had had fewer arguments than it ate grams of meat (except for the shamefully carnivorous Chinese). The argument was over whether the glacier was considered a slow-moving one. In precise, technical detail, which made everyone who thought themselves experts never mention the subject again, we were told that it was indeed a slow glacier. Our lost equipment could take 70 years to come out at the bottom in that case! Mallory and Irvine still have ten years to go.

The wind really worried us. We made one thwarted attempt to go up but it was teasing us, and we retreated from Camp Two despondent and very frustrated.

The hardest part of climbing a mountain like Everest is the waiting for something that is totally unpredictable and over which you have no control. You have to maintain the burning drive to succeed when doubt can quell the hottest of desires. The key is to relax. Narayan and Tenzing with their approach to catering with the little food we had left, and their constant good humour, helped a lot. So did the skiing. We were fully acclimatized and skiing had become the exhilarating pleasure it normally is.

The wind began to die, so on 28 September we went to Camp Two. We stayed there for two days and the doubts and frustration crept back again. On 1 October calmness came and we left Camp Two for the high ground, but Geoff had to turn back after getting a severe headache and dizzy spells. It was a sad moment as we watched him drop down the ropes alone.

From the end of the ropes at 7,400 metres we climbed unroped. Greg and I found a perfect bivvy site inside a crevasse for Camp Three; it had been a short day but we could not pass this place up. We dug a large ledge and settled in to our cathedral-like surroundings. We felt good.

The next day was the day of the Great Couloir. It is a massive feature and we were lucky all its soft snow had been blown away. A hard crust extended up it most of the way and crampons crunched in perfectly without breaking through. It was a long, long way to climb using one technique; my ankles ached and my feet had a tendency to slip out of the boots. Late afternoon came and we still had plenty of ground to cover. It was blustery and exceedingly cold.

So this is 8,000 metres! You get cold and you can't warm up; the cold drives me on to seek shelter. Instinctively my attention focuses on a snowy shoulder out to the left, off route but in the sun. I go there and it's warm. Thank God for my down suit. I pull the hood down and feebly start digging a ledge. Greg arrives, then

## Lincoln Hall and Tim Macartney-Snape



• IN 1978 AN AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY Mountaineering Club expedition set out to tackle Dunagiri in the Garhwal Himalaya of India.

It was the first all-Australian expedition to attempt a major Himalayan peak.

Bad weather and inexperience proved formidable obstacles. The expedition was about to retreat, its objective unrealized, when two of its strongest members, Tim Macartney-Snape and Lincoln Hall, saw a break in the weather and made a dash for the summit.

They were successful, but the price was high; Lincoln lost the tips of two toes to frostbite.

Since then, Tim and Lincoln have visited several other world-ranking summits. Their most recent high-altitude destination was Annapurna II in Nepal. (See article in *Wild* no 11.)

Trevor Lewis caught them as they were preparing for the North Face of Mt Everest.

### How did you start climbing?

Lincoln, I had no lust to go climbing, to begin with; friends and teachers at school were into it — I went along for the ride. I started climbing when I was 15. When I went to university I joined the mountaineering club — soon I was climbing every weekend.

Tim, I came to climbing as part of a general love of the outdoors, I went to Timbertop and did a lot of bushwalking and skiing, but being at Timbertop was only the catalyst — the urge to get into the outdoors was already there. I didn't start technical rock climbing until I went to university and joined the mountaineering club.

Could you imagine, at that stage, that you would end up climbing Everest?

Tim, Certainly not! My interest in mountaineering, as opposed to rock climbing, grew out of my walking experience. I first went to New Zealand to go on long tramping trips. I got into areas like Fiordland and Aspiring where walking can only take you so far. Mountaineering was the logical next step.

### What did you get up to in New Zealand?

Lincoln, I spent three climbing seasons in New Zealand; Tim spent two. We climbed Nazomí by the Macinnes Ridge — it was an early ascent of the South Face of Mt Hicks — it was supposed to be hard but it wasn't... We climbed the South and East Ridges of Cook.

Tim, The East Ridge was just a nice climb. How do you see the difference between mountaineering and rock climbing?

Tim, Mountaineering is a total experience.

Lincoln, Specialist rock climbers are pretty single-minded; many of them hold that mountaineering requires no skill, only a lot of hard work and willingness to expose yourself to objective danger.

Tim, But there's more psychology in mountaineering compared to rock climbing where problems are solved mainly by intensive physical training.

Lincoln, A big mountain presents a vast problem which can only be solved piece by piece,

The state of mind necessary to deal with this problem — not to be overwhelmed by the sheer size of it — is as important as the physical conditioning which you need to deal with the cold, fatigue and high altitude. Rock climbing is an intense experience which lasts for a few hours; it offers nothing to compare with the total commitment needed to spend a month or more on a mountain.

### Why did you decide to climb Everest?

Tim, When we climbed Mt Auyanquen in 1981 we considered other climbs we might do in China and thought, 'why not Everest from the Tibetan side?'

### For you, Everest is 'just another mountain'?

Lincoln, Sure; I know that in climbing circles there is a widely-held view that Everest isn't such a big deal. To us, though, it presents a major challenge. We'll be climbing a new route and that represents a psychological barrier to overcome. We'll be climbing alpine-style, which means total reliance on our own resources. We'll be pushing our personal limits, and that's what it's all about.

Tim, Our Everest will be a 98-year-old grandmother's Kosisko.

### Will there be life after Everest?

Tim, I hope to go for smaller but more technical climbs; Mt Kenya, for instance. I'd like to devote more attention to climbing and less to logistics.

Lincoln, For example, this Everest trip will involve three months on the mountain itself, as well as all the organization, administration and fund-raising that goes before. It claims too much of your life.

Tim, Climbing is not the be-all and end-all of existence.

In recent times there has been much concern about the toll which has been taken on Himalayan ecology by mountaineering and trekking activities.

Tim, Certainly. The mega-mountaineering expeditions of the past caused untold damage. The high-altitude juniper forests of the Everest region were totally destroyed to provide fuel for climbing expeditions, along with their hundreds of porters and guides and camp followers. All of the base camps are marked by huge rubbish dumps, which is totally unnecessary since glaciators make perfect waste disposal systems.

### Is the situation likely to improve?

Lincoln, The trend is being reversed. The government in Nepal has cracked down on firewood use in the Everest region, for example. That may be only a token gesture but at least it demonstrates an awareness of the problem.

Tim, Change in that direction must come with a different attitude to the climbing itself. The old view of mountains as objects to be conquered goes with a mercenary attitude towards the environment. I prefer to work with nature rather than against it; to go with the flow. If you approach the mountain with that philosophy you can't be unaware of your impact on the environment. •



The North Face of Mt Everest beyond Changtse, left, and above the upper Rongbuk Glacier. The route taken and camps are marked. The pre-World War Two British attempts, the 1960 Chinese ascent, and the more recent solo ascent by Reinhold Messner were based on the North/North-east Ridge, frequently on its west side. British climbers Peter Boardman and Joe Tasker disappeared recently on the, as yet, unclimbed North-east Ridge, which joins the North Ridge. A large Japanese expedition has climbed the North Face somewhat right of the Australian route. The West Ridge, first climbed by an American expedition in 1963, was the scene of the Australian tragedy described on page 33. Macartney-Snape

Andy, but Lincoln is still down in the couloir — he is having trouble with cold hands and feet. Up here, the pain of the cold is the worst thing. Our Super Diamond tent just fits on the ledge and we pile in, all four of us. It is very cramped so I cook with the door open, the stoves teetering on the snow. It is a bad night but being horizontal is all that matters.

In the morning it takes four hours to get going. We traverse into the head of the couloir, bad snow. Greg and I are in a quandary about the route ahead; from below it all looks difficult but there is a ramp to the right that is in the sun and that is where we go.

The climbing is absorbing and serves to concentrate my mind, and I become

more aware and confident. It is mixed ground, bad snow on poor rock. Keep going, it won't go on for ever. I feel very insecure, my crampons are not made for climbing rock. Greg asks for a rope and I welcome the opportunity to have a rest. Untangling a rope at that altitude is quite a test of my patience. Greg climbs through, up the remaining steep snow which is horrible. We rest at the top of the wall.

Suddenly, Andy appears. He pleads for a rope but he is out of reach. I tell him he has climbed the hard part. Lincoln, he says, has turned back, the cold being too much for his feet and hands. One of Andy's crampons is broken.

It is 3 pm. Greg and I push on and Andy follows after tying his crampons together. The sun, bright in a clear sky, is heading for the horizon much faster than we seem to be heading for the top. Three hundred metres to go, and every metre is a major obstacle up here. Gulls of wind get stronger. Near the top I decide to head for the West Ridge. I'm thinking of the descent during darkness — 'make it as easy as possible'.

Suddenly the top appears just ahead. It is hard to believe, but I wait for Greg and

do some filming of him coming up.

Looking at the world in the evening light is quite an emotional experience. We walk to the summit, no human artefacts here, just wind-blown snow. I am surprised to be looking down at Lhotse and Makalu — they are far below. I feel sad being above them. Their summits seem unattainable when you walk below their faces; now the mystery has gone it will be different.

I turn on my tape recorder and record a few words, no grand speech but a few heart-felt words about wilderness conservation in Australia, uranium mining ...

It is getting dark so we have to leave. Andy has not made it, but after a while we see him cautiously heading down. He must have come very close.

Darkness descends and the wind picks up. •

*Tim Macartney-Snape has a string of successful Himalayan ascents to his credit, including Annapurna, Arna Dablam, Kanchenjunga II and, in 1981, Mt Everest, by an independent route. This latest climb, and the style in which it was accomplished, has shown him to be a Himalayan climber of world class and possessing an unusual ability to adapt to the rigors of extreme altitude. He is a director of the adventure travel operator, Wild Horizons.*

*After an epic retreat from Camp Four, the rest of the team safely followed Macartney-Snape off the mountain, but sadly Andy Henderson had been frostbitten and was to later lose large parts of his fingers.*

The 'other Australian expedition's' daring and tragic attempt on Mt Everest; by Chris Baxter.

# The West Ridge

• WHEN THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN EVEREST Expedition achieved its outstanding success on the North Face of Mt Everest, most Australians were unaware that another Australian expedition was also at work on the world's highest peak. It was only when the tragic deaths, less than a week later, of Craig Nottle and Fred From on Mt Everest's West Ridge caused 'the other expedition' to make headlines in the Australian Press that many Australians realized that there were two expeditions. Unlike the North Face climb, the West Ridge route was tackled without substantial sponsorship, a support team or the use of extensive fixed ropes.

The Everest West Ridge 1984 Expedition was organized and led by Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund Hillary who made the first ascent of Mt Everest in 1953. A veteran of several ambitious but unsuccessful Himalayan expeditions, Hillary was accompanied by fellow New Zealander Kim Logan, who was on his first visit to the Himalayas. Logan is widely recognized as New Zealand's most brilliant alpinist with a number of futuristic new routes to his credit.

The expedition also included four Australians. Queenslander Fred From, a close friend of Hillary, was on his third Himalayan expedition with Hillary. Although none of these attained its goal, From went to over 8,000 metres on each, making him Australia's most experienced mountaineer at high altitude, and he and Hillary had earlier made a successful team on some of the hardest climbs in the New Zealand Alps. The rest of the team was made up by three promising, and somewhat younger, Australian alpinists, Rod Mackenzie, Jon Muir and Craig Nottle — the self-styled International Turkey Patrol. The ITP members had been to the Himalayas only once before when they made a dazzling ascent of a difficult route on the relatively low peak Changabang. They had not done a major climb with the New Zealanders or From. The West Ridge expedition could not, therefore, be regarded as a team in the same way as the North Face expedition was.

The ITP joined Hillary's team after deaths on Makalu in 1983 robbed the 1984 expedition of two key members, as reported in *Wild* no. 12. The ITP, which originally also included Mark Moorhead who was killed on Makalu in 1983, had achieved outstanding alpine ascents in

New Zealand and, particularly, in Europe. Muir is regarded by many as Australia's most brilliant alpinist and certainly Australia's leading exponent of both solo rockclimbing and solo alpinism.

In an interview with *Wild*, leader Hillary described how the expedition, which approached Mt Everest (8,848 metres) by Nepal, had established four camps on the mountain. The fourth and final camp was established at 7,900 metres, some 900 metres below the summit. It had been hoped to have Camp Four higher, but steep ground immediately above the site



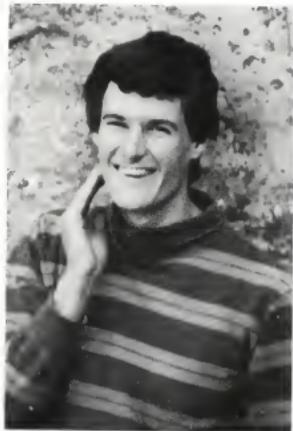
Fred From

selected meant that it would have been well over 8,000 metres before another suitable site could be found. At such an altitude physical recovery from the exertion of climbing would not have been possible.

The entire team spent the night of 8 October at Camp Four after a day of superb weather. Hillary said that to this point the expedition had been a very happy one and everything had gone perfectly. He said they had been able to achieve 'an incredibly successful acclimatization' and having regard to this, and the fact that they were able to maintain an ascent rate of 100 metres an hour, he was 'absolutely confident that at least some (members) of the expedition would get to the top,'

certainly From and Logan who were going particularly well. He added that the whole team had 'ample experience to cope' with the terrain encountered and 'certainly seemed to be doing so.'

After what Hillary described as a 'reasonable night' at Camp Four, the team, except for Mackenzie who was not feeling



Craig Nottle. Photo Russell Crow

well and remained in camp, headed for the summit. The wind, however, had picked up, and at 8,140 metres Hillary, Muir and Nottle decided to return, unroped, to Camp Four. From and Logan decided to go on. About 100 metres above camp Nottle must have tripped and fallen to his death from what Hillary described as a 'perfect 35°-40° crampon slope'. His two companions did not witness the fall.

From a difficult step at about 8,200 metres the lead pair looked back to see, to their horror, movement down the side of the ridge. Thinking they'd seen two bodies, they immediately began to descend. Within 20 or 30 metres of the very place Nottle must have fallen, From slipped on a patch of ice in the snow and he, too, plunged to his death.

The attempt was abandoned and the four survivors left the mountain. •

Chris Baxter, editor and publisher of *Wild*, has climbed in Australia, New Zealand, Europe and North America and has been prominent in Australian climbing circles for about 20 years.

A scenic landscape view of a valley with hills under a clear blue sky. The foreground is filled with dense green foliage and trees. The middle ground shows rolling hills covered in vegetation. The background features a range of mountains under a bright blue sky.

A Route



Tony Cunneen traces his explorer ancestors' footsteps in the Blue Mountains.



● HAVE YOU EVER HAD A DREAM, A SECRET ambition you've harboured for 20 years or so? Perhaps you've wanted to climb a mountain, join the Foreign Legion or enter a Tibetan Llamistry. Whatever it is, you never seem to manage it. Well, I dreamt of being an explorer — to enter the wilderness and find a way through it.

Maybe it was in my blood. After all, I was hopelessly fascinated by my convict ancestor — Samuel Thorley. What was he like? What did he do? I could find little recorded about him. His son, however, seems to have been quite a lad. For the three years before 1820 he'd thrashed his way about the awful wilderness to the north-west of Sydney, trying to find the 'Route to the North'. By plotting an overland track to the upper Hunter valley he'd received a grant of land away from the crowded Sydney Settlement. I'd thrill to read his name listed as a member of the different official and private expeditions which left the Hawkesbury River at Windsor. To open up the north they'd overcome heat, thirst, hunger and their fear of the aborigines. In August 1983 I indulged my dream and set out to retrace their footsteps.

It took a fair amount of work just to organize the trip. No one seemed very interested in joining me on a 320 kilometre walk, so I resigned myself to doing it alone. Other people's reactions ranged from wall-eyed incomprehension to a cloying form of gushing emotion. I endured embarrassing speeches about 'the search for the Australian Soul' or, even worse, 'White Roots'. Such sentiments were wonderful

*The author resting after his climb from Webbs Creek and 'about to get lost'. Above, hand and weapon stencils made by the Darkinjung tribe of aborigines near Webbs Creek. All photos Tony Cunneen*

# to the North

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over the port and cigars but bore little relation to the coming ordeal.

But I plugged away at it, trying out various diets based on muesli and spaghetti, then getting sore knees as I crawled over the sea of maps spread over my lounge-room floor. By day I prowled round Lane Cove with a pack full of bricks. At night I slept in a tent in my parents' back yard. If nothing else, I was laying the foundation of an enduring reputation for eccentricity. A friend drove me along the Putty Road to reconnoitre the route. Along the way we stashed food in three caves at what we hoped would be weekly intervals on the coming walk. I intended to resup-



ly myself from these caches. All that remained was to put on my boots and go. I set out from Wisemans Ferry a week later.

It's difficult to recall the first days in an ordered fashion. I walked west-north-west along Webbs Creek, yet can remember only seemingly unrelated experiences: the crack of whip birds echoing from deep within the gorge, ghost gums standing silent in the morning mist, chestnut horses galloping through an isolated poplar plantation and the nights spent shivering as the damp chilled my sleeping bag.

For five days I followed the narrow ravine of Webbs Creek, away from civilization, floundering awkwardly through the wilderness. On my third day, slogging along the creek bed, I blundered into quicksand. Within seconds I was in deep-

ly and had to grab hold of rocks to save myself. The experience left me feeling shakily vulnerable to the threat of the bush. Singleton seemed an impossible distance away.

At night I could feel the loneliness as acutely as if it were a physical pain. I'd curl up on a bed of dry leaves beneath a rock overhang to escape the dew. A fire in the mouth of the shelter shut out the dark. Lying there, reading, or simply listening to the murmurings of the forest, I had to keep a tight rein on my imagination. If my mind wandered too freely there was nothing to bring it back.

The final push from the headwaters of Webb's Creek to the Devils Hole and my first food drop was to have been a triumph. The first section completed!

I planned to start the day by climbing the rock walls above the creek. Then I'd meander along the ridge tops until I reached an old four-wheel-drive track which led to the Putty Road just north of Colo Heights. With a clear blue sky, pleasantly warm weather and the wildflowers in bloom, it would be a day to savour. It should have been but it wasn't. Instead, for no good reason, I got lost.

All went well until I started climbing. On the rock my legs shook with fear. My relief on reaching the top was such that I simply wandered off, enjoying the wildflowers and the view. Thus with my head in the clouds I walked off my route.

It took hours to find my way out. Ridges seemed to head off in every direction and there were no definite features to use for bearings. My imagination conjured up all sorts of malignant spirits who rumpled the landscape around me as I plodded through it. In the end, I simply walked west, negotiating any obstacle, until I came to the narrow, sandy scar which was the track. I was too tired to be happy. Slogging along in the late afternoon I told

valleys known as Mellong. Here I cut the early explorers' route to the north. My ancestor, Phillip Thorley, travelled through here in 1817 as well as opening up the road in the 1820s. In 1819 John Howe led the first successful full traverse to the upper Hunter. I carried a copy of his journal with me. From Mellong onwards I tried to recreate his journey, checking his bearings, using his landmarks, trying to get into his mind. The landscape had changed little since his time and I was able to identify his 'long swamps' as well as the valley he called 'Narang Wheeny'. In the excitement

most of it eaten by animals. For the final 130 kilometres to Singleton I was left with only some muesli, tinned fish, pasta and tea. I got very hungry and learnt something of what it meant to be an explorer. Adversities, like hunger or the fall which broke my camera, simply became other aspects of the journey. As with the sight of the mountains or the sound of the birds, I got used to them.

The country became too rough for me to follow Howe's route exactly and lack of food forced me to move quickly, with only a few stops to enjoy a swim. Occasional-



Kings Waterhole 'where Howe and I camped 160 years apart'

ment of discovery I walked a lot of extra distance.

One night, 12 days out, I camped beside the same 'large pond' as Howe and Thorley had used. Now it's called Kings Waterhole. I sat staring out over its still, black surface expecting to see bearded men in cabbage-tree hats walk out from the gums opposite. Just on dusk I stood up and shouted out Thorley's name as if this would conjure the old bushman from his grave. These were the first words I had spoken in five days and the solitude had affected me a little. After a few days alone you start to talk to your billy; after a week or so it starts to answer back.

Following the journal, I walked up through Putty, managing to cover 100 kilometres in four days, until, like Howe and Thorley, I encountered the 'creeks lagoons and rocks' of the northern wilderness. The aborigines had told Howe that he'd never get through it alive and local farmers gave me much the same advice. This was the terrain which had defeated at least three expeditions before 1819. It nearly beat me as well.

My last food cache had not been stored properly so I arrived in pouring rain to find

I came across rock paintings and carvings of the Darkinung tribe, the aborigines who had guided Howe through the mountains. In return, white men took their land.

Eventually, however, I was allowed my moment of triumph. After three weeks' walking, I stood high on the cliffs overlooking the Hunter valley. I stayed for hours staring at the endless blue hills, savoring that 'once in a lifetime feeling' of achievement. Next morning I walked down the road to Jerry's Plains.

A day later I swaggered into Singleton feeling as if I was made of rawhide and catgut. Returning to civilization proved to be as great a shock as leaving it. Traffic noise was painful, crowds oppressive. At night I felt claustrophobic in the small hotel room. I even stretched out in front of the fire and played the local hero in the pub. Initially at least, I felt pretty pleased with myself. I thought a lot about the journey. I still do.

It's hard for me to put it into perspective. Whatever else it was — hard, dangerous or simply a waste of time — it was special to me to have retraced my great, great, great, great, grandfather's explorations. Already I'm looking for people to come with me on another trip. I'll never do it alone again. •

## I was laying the foundation of an enduring reputation for eccentricity.

myself that this was the adventure I had been seeking. I had experienced something of the panic which the bush can cause. In the evening my only human contact was the roar of trucks drifting over from the distant Putty Road. Such was my mental state that even this was a comfort. I rested at the Devils Hole for two days then pushed on north. After three more days' walking I came to the Woomerah Mountains.

This range led me to a peculiar piece of land — a series of shallow, swampy





# Tad Janocinski

Aftermath of the  
disastrous 1983  
Lorne-Otway,  
Victoria, bushfires.





# Cruising the S



# nowy

Victoria's lower Snowy River offers relaxed paddling and plenty to see; by George Seddon.



● THE SNOWY RIVER BETWEEN McKILLOP Bridge and the Buchan River is one of the most popular canoe trips in south-eastern Australia, and deservedly so. The river has cut its valley nearly 1,000 metres below the Wulgulmerang Plateau — an outlier of the Monaro Tableland — so the scenery is spectacular, especially through the Tulloch Ard Gorge. It is also relatively dangerous, and quite unsuitable for beginners, who regularly get into difficulties. But there are some very attractive touring river sections in Victoria that can give much pleasure to relative novices, older people or families with young children. Such places are rarely described because the sport is often directed towards the thrill seeker and white water enthusiast. For this reason, the Snowy-below-Buchan, which has much to offer, is generally neglected. I shall try to give a brief account of the river and its natural history for those who may be tempted to canoe at a leisurely, observant and reflective pace that allows them to learn something about the world around them, rather than to dash through it with all possible speed.

**Maps.** *Orbost, Murrindal* (both 1:100,000), *Bairnsdale* (1:250,000) — all National Mapping Authority topographic maps.

The *Orbost* map is the most detailed. The *Murrindal* map covers the area to the north of the Buchan River. The *Bairnsdale*

*Lower Snowy scenes; rainforest near Wood Point and, above, sandy beaches like this one make attractive campsites. All photos George Seddon*

map covers a much greater area and is useful to see the local area in its broader regional setting.

#### Access.

In. The mouth of the Buchan River can be reached by car (without four-wheel-drive) by following an unsealed track off the Buchan-Orbost Road. Approaching from Orbost, cross the Buchan River and continue towards Buchan for 0.9 kilometre. There are then two unsealed roads leading off to the north (right); the signpost reads 'Moona Road' and 'Basin Road'. Follow the latter, which crosses the Murrindal River, then runs almost due east (the Old Basin Road) for three kilometres up a hill, down to a very shallow ford, then up a steep hill (Rocky Knob). There is then a clearly marked canoe track leading south (right) winding along and down a long spur to the mouth of the Buchan River. This is a Forests Commission track, and the Commission also maintains the little camping area at the Buchan mouth. (Note: if you approach from Buchan township, the turn-off is 3.8 kilometres down the Orbost Road. This approach implies that you have arranged to be picked up at the other end.)

Out. The Buchan-Orbost Road is close to the river along much of the Bete Bolong Flats, and it is possible to get out almost anywhere, but for convenience, and to avoid unnecessary trespass, use a small road loop by the river left behind when the road was straightened. Driving from Orbost along the Buchan Road, the road leaves the Princes Highway and joins the river after a short detour. The road soon runs between the hills that mark the boundary of the flood-plain and the river. Then the flood-plain opens out again and the road forks (the left fork is sign-posted 'Bete Bolong'; the right fork is the Buchan Road). Shortly after the fork, and crossing a small stream, the road loop will be encountered on the east (right) side. It provides parking and good access to the river. The nearest house, on the other side of the road, is the property of John Vanderwarf; local residents generally prefer to know your movements, especially if you are leaving a car for a few days.

**Emergency access.** At the mouth of the Buchan, the Snowy River is about 40 metres above sea level, and at Bete Bolong about ten metres above sea level, but the forested hills around it rise steeply to well over 200 metres and access is therefore difficult. There are sign-posted Forests Commission tracks leading off the Buchan-Orbost Road, and three of them lead to the river: the Back Break Track, the

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Long Point Track, and the Sandy Point Track. All of them require four-wheel-drive, and the final sections are very steep, treacherous after rain, and sometimes blocked by fallen trees. Vehicle access should therefore be attempted only in an emergency, but they offer a safe if rather long walk-out to the main road. There is only one vehicular route from the Buchan Road to the river, and that is on private property. The turn-off is marked 'Adview', about three kilometres north of the Sandy Point Track. It leads to two farmhouses by the river (proprietor: Roddy Kleinitz) by way of a locked gate. These two houses can be seen from the river in the course of a canoe trip, and they are the only houses to be seen throughout the journey. It is worth knowing that they are there in an extreme emergency, but do not otherwise intrude.

There is no practicable access by road from the east side: the Garnett Track runs along the top of the ridge, but it is a steep climb up from the river, and a very long hike out to the 'Yalmy Road.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the Snowy through much of its course is that it is an antecedent river, which means that it had established its meandering course before the uplift of the land around it, and was able to maintain it by cutting down as the land rose. This is especially apparent in the Snowy-below-Buchan, which tends generally south-south-east, but in a series of great loops that are typical of a river meandering across a flood-plain — as it probably was when this course was established. Sandy Point, Long Point and Wood Point are the extreme examples, especially Wood Point, where the river travels six kilometres to achieve one kilometre as the crow flies. These loops are aligned along a north-east/south-west trend followed by many of the major ridges and tributary streams (especially Wall Creek and the Sandy Point spur), so their alignment may also relate to zones of weakness in the underlying rocks.

A second major feature of the river is the abundance of broad sandy beaches, a delight for swimming and camping. The sand is derived primarily from the weathering of the granites which predominate in the upper reaches of the river in New South Wales. Sandy Point offers good camping for a leisurely two-day trip: the mouth of Rocky Creek, and then Wood Point would make two good overnight stops for a lazy three-day trip, with time for some exploration on foot.

There are no major rapids on this section of the river, and from Sandy Point downstream it is all flat water. There is a grade two rapid at Lucas Point, about one kilometre downstream from the Buchan mouth, and similar modest rapids at each bend to Adview farm. The river then narrows for two kilometres until it opens out again near Sandy Point. All of these rapids can easily be portaged by carrying the canoes across the sandy bars on the inside of the curve, and none of them is

difficult unless the river is really high; above about 1.8 metres at McKillops Bridge. If the water is around 80 centimetres at McKillops Bridge, you will ground on sand banks in places, but will still have an enjoyable paddle if you are not in a hurry.

From the mouth of the Buchan to Orbost you will encounter five markedly different kinds of vegetation: three varieties of eucalypt forest, rainforest in the gullies along the river, and the great mahogany gums that line the banks from Bete Bolong to Mario.

in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and near the Den of Nargun in Glenaladale National Park on the Mitchell River. The trees along the Snowy do not attain the great size and spreading, twisting trunks that the tree attains in small, sheltered gullies, but it is still a striking tree. The flowers are small, with five bright yellow petals around a central mass of fluffy stamens.

The kanooka is not restricted to rainforest, but is a component of warm temperate rainforest. You will encounter many patches of rainforest along the river,

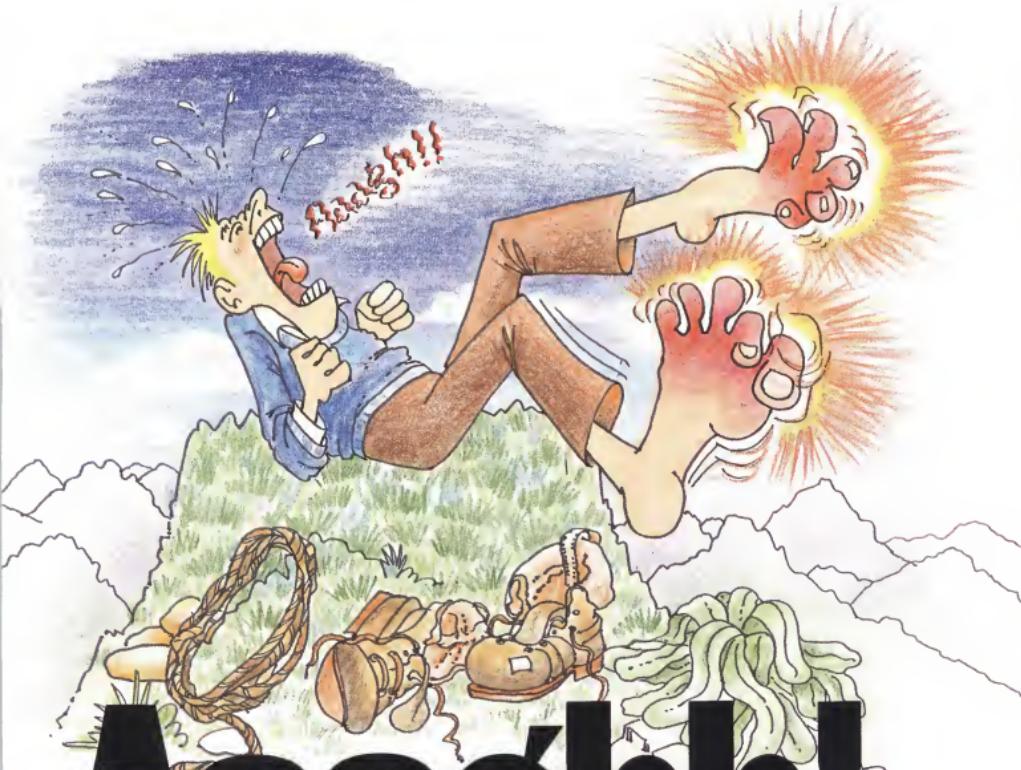


Even on this placid section of the river, the water level can rise rapidly, creating difficult canoeing.

Three types of trees are of interest near to the river's edge: the river peppermint, the Snowy River wattle, and the kanooka or water gum. The river peppermint is an elegant tree that is often around 25 metres high, and may reach 50 metres, with rather light and gracefully 'weeping' foliage and a clean white straight trunk except for a basal stocking of persistent fibrous bark. This tree is limited in distribution to the south-eastern coast of Australia. The aborigines of the Snowy River called it 'wang-ngara', and this name has been preserved in the Waygara State Forest which abuts the river from Buchan to Bete Bolong. The Snowy River wattle is virtually restricted to the vicinity of the river and its tributaries; it is very common around McKillops Bridge, further north on the river. The 'leaves' are narrow linear phyllodes. The profuse flowers consist of globular heads in short axillary racemes. Other wattles are also common along the sandy banks, especially the black wattle and silver wattle. Kanooka is found right at the water's edge. The bark is smooth and greyish-white; it can be strikingly beautiful, as in a superb gnarled old tree

especially where deep, sheltered gullies meet the river with an eastern or southern exposure. This is one of the delights of travelling by canoe, in that you gain access to many areas of pristine rainforest which very few people have the opportunity to visit. The dominant trees are the lillypilly with its dense crown of shining ovate-elliptic leaves drawn to a fine point, fluffy cream flowers and purplish, fleshy, berry-like fruit, and the sweet Pittosporum (common in Melbourne gardens and in the Dandenongs, where it has been introduced and run wild) — its glossy, crinkled leaves, fragrant cream flowers and orange berries are well known. Yellowwood, mutton-wood are other trees of the rainforest. Creepers and climbers are very common, festooning the canopy; epiphytic plants, including orchids and ferns, grow on the trunks and smother fallen logs.

The 'jungle' is the most complex plant community in Victoria, and it is well worth learning more about it. Many conservationists are very vocal about the need to preserve rainforest, but remarkably few have any real knowledge of it. Near Wood Point on the west bank between two rainforest gullies there is a reserve containing a plant rare in Victoria, *Symplocos stawellii*.



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# Make Your Own Gear

John Bally tells how.



• ALTHOUGH SOME SKILL IS NECESSARY, IT IS NOT AS DIFFICULT AS YOU MIGHT THINK TO MAKE YOUR OWN OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT.

Next time you visit your favourite outdoor shop, take a close look at the way the gear is made. Most of it is very simple. Commercial manufacturers operate in a competitive industry with high labour costs and cannot afford to make gear that is too complicated or specialized; they are forced to cut corners in putting together and finishing their products.

With a bit of practice you can often do a better job at home and make the gear you want rather than the gear manufacturers want to produce. But remember, it does take a little practice, so start on simple projects like stuff sacks, rucksacks, side-pockets or a pair of gaiters and graduate to more complicated gear as your skill improves. If you can't work out how to make an item of equipment, simply visit your favourite shop and have a look

at the way a manufacturer tackled the problem. Glossy catalogues are also good sources of ideas. Once you have seen what the industry has to offer, put together the best ideas and adapt the designs to suit your own needs.

Apart from enthusiasm, which is indispensable for any self-motivated activity, the first thing you will need is a sewing machine. The average domestic machine just won't do. Despite advertising claims, even expensive domestic machines are too flimsy for all but the lightest outdoor fabrics. If you are serious about making gear, it is well worth investing in a second-hand Singer industrial machine. There are many suitable models, but the 96K type is a pretty good all-round machine and can be picked up for around \$100 in *The Trading Post*. If you don't like the thought of a noisy industrial machine cluttering up your spare room, an old Singer treadle will

Home-made Gore-Tex tunnel tent and its proud owner.  
John Bally collection

handle most projects easily, if a little more slowly. These beautifully finished machines can be bought, in good condition, for about \$50. Don't worry about buying them second-hand, they were built to last (almost) forever and Singer maintains an unbelievably good stock of spare parts for machines built in this century.

Finding raw materials is the greatest obstacle to be overcome. None of the new high-technology outdoor fabrics is made in Australia. Few companies import them and they usually attract high customs duties.

Canvas and leather are the traditional materials for outdoor gear and canvas of excellent quality is made in Australia. It is available in weights from six ounces/square yard to about 18 ounces/square

# Make a Day Pack

• THIS DAY PACK COSTS \$12 TO MAKE OR \$10 IF YOU can get two friends to make packs also. Cutting three packs at the one time makes more efficient use of the material.

## Requirements

55 cm 270 gsm<sup>2</sup> Korduk (1 m if cutting three)  
18 cm 18 mm soft tape (3 X 6 cm)  
10 cm 120 gsm<sup>2</sup> nylon; however scrap cloth material could suffice  
1.0 m 50 mm tape  
1.4 m 18 mm stiffened rucksack tape (cut into four 35 cm lengths)  
1 ptk bias binding  
3 18 mm buckles  
1 reel thread (30 m just makes it)  
1 m 3 mm cord

## Instructions

Draw out the patterns on the fabric including all markings, then cut out. The side with markings on it will be referred to as the inside. In addition, cut a piece of nylon 80 cm x 8 cm.

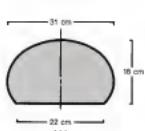
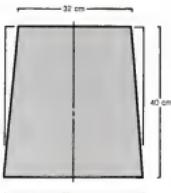
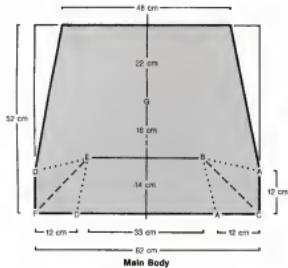


Diagram 1

On the inside of main body place the two points marked A together to a fold line between B and the corner of the material (C). Stitch along dotted line from A to B. Repeat for other side D, E, F.

Stitch one end of the 18 mm lid fastening tape to the middle of the outside of the main body, 22 cm from the top (point G).

On outside of the back section locate shoulder straps by folding the 50 mm tape in half and locating the fold in the middle, 30 cm above the base. Separate the ends of the tape so that the

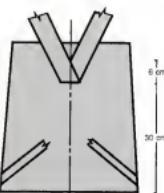


Diagram 2

V is formed 6 cm from the fold (refer to diagram 2). Locate 18 mm tape for the handle with 50 mm tape and back, then begin stitching across straps and handle 36 cm above base.

Locate a section of 18 mm tape in each bottom corner 2 cm above base as shown.

Sew buckles on to shoulder straps.

Join the back section to main body by placing right sides together and aligning centres. Stitch 15 mm in from edge, first along base then up the sides. Reinforce the bottom corners.

Change to a light thread and sew bias tape round the edges of lid.

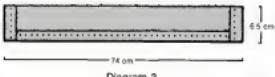


Diagram 3

Change to a light needle and prepare nylon strip by folding one long edge over 15 mm and stitching. Then at each end fold edge over 15 mm, then another 15 mm. Now stitch, enclosing the raw edge (refer to diagram 3).

Change back to strong needle and thread and sew buckle on to middle front lid.

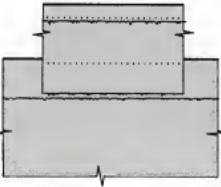


Diagram 4

Fold in the top edge of the pack 15 mm and place unhemmed long edge of nylon along the unfinished edge of back, aligning the middle of the nylon with the middle of back. Refer to section shown in diagram 4. Stitch closely to the folded edge of the pack.

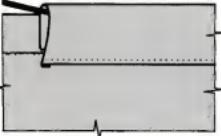


Diagram 5

Enclosing the 1 m piece of cord, fold the nylon down, sealing all unfinished edges. Stitch close to the edge of the nylon as shown.

Stitch the lid to the back just above the shoulder straps. Voila! •

Ian Charles

yard and is finished with a variety of colouring and waterproofing agents. Canvas generally breathes very well but only a few finishes can be called waterproof rather than water resistant. Birkmeier Ultraproof, in eight to 12 ounce weights, is one of the best for outdoor gear.

Far from being outdated, leather is ideal for all those fiddling little bits with complex shapes that are hard to hem. Leather is tough, easily worked and will not fray.

Cordura is a heavy woven fabric made of nylon fibres which have been crinkled, rather like wool fibres, to make the cloth more flexible and soft. It has about three times the strength of canvas of the same weight and a higher abrasion resistance. Cordura usually comes with a not-very-waterproof coating and is available in a range of really bright colours. Unlike canvas, it has a little bit of stretch that makes it a joy to sew.

The most common fabric in outdoor equipment is light, proofed nylon which is used for tent flys and floors, waterproof clothing, stuff bags — in fact almost anything that needs to be light and waterproof. Nylon fabric is not inherently waterproof. In fact, it breathes better than many natural fibres. The sweaty feeling sometimes associated with nylon is due to its low ability to absorb water rather than its moisture transmitting ability. Nylon can only be made waterproof by coating or impregnating it with a substance, such as polyurethane or rubber, which will not transmit water. Unfortunately, the quality of these coatings varies widely and is very difficult to judge. Most coatings are quite waterproof when new but many deteriorate quickly. Traditionally, the best coated nylons originate in the USA, but American origin is no guarantee of quality. Australian coated nylon is often on the heavy side of 75 grams/square metre and has a fair to poor coating, but some of Brella's latest attempts have been encouraging.

Luckily it is possible to make a very simple device to test waterproofing. All you need is a threaded water tap with a hose connection to match. Simply sandwich the fabric sample between rubber washers and use the threaded hose connection to hold the sample assembly against the tap outlet. Turn the tap fully on and measure the volume of water which flows through the sample in a fixed time. Since the tap pressure is unknown, the readings have no absolute meaning but they are very valuable for comparing different fabric samples.

Even the best coatings are subject to wear and tear. For really waterproof equipment, try using two layers of coated fabric with the coated sides together. The relatively sticky coatings tend to stick together, protecting both of them from abrasion. This approach works really well for stuff sacks and has the additional advantage of placing the slippery non-proofed side of the cloth on both the inside and outside of the bag for easy stuffing. Lining rucksacks in this way makes them

easier to pack and much more waterproof.

Light nylon, without a waterproof coating, is used for tent liners, sleeping bags and clothing. Although unproofed nylon is quite hard to find, a wide range of light spinaker cloths are available from sail-makers.

Sailcloths are usually impregnated with silicone resin to make them windproof and water resistant. For higher breathability, these resins can be broken down by stretching the cloth on the bias and they can be washed out with warm soapy water.

Aluminium for tent poles can be purchased from some aircraft spare parts suppliers. The two suitable alloys available in Australia are 2024-T3 and 6061-T6. The former is an extremely hard and strong alloy (ultimate tensile strength over 400 MPa) but it is a little bit brittle, difficult to polish and very expensive. 6061-T6 is more easily worked, much cheaper and quite strong (310 MPa). A simple way to obtain a pleasing, lustrous finish is to first polish the poles with steel wool, then immerse them for about five minutes in a diluted NaOH (caustic soda) bath. Poles are left with a thin aluminium hydroxide coating which prevents further oxidation.

Thread for stitching outdoor equipment should be a polyester/cotton blend. Polyester provides durable strength and cotton will swell when wet to fill stitch holes and reduce leakage. Coat's Koban polyester-cored cotton thread is ideal. Use Koban 36 for lighter fabrics and Koban 25 for heavy cloths, if your machine can handle it. To determine the correct needle size, begin by threading a needle with about 50 centimetres of thread. Hold the thread vertically, stretched tight with the needle at the top. If the needle falls straight to the bottom, it is too large for the thread. Now use your 'third hand' to give the needle a spin. If the needle is still spinning when it reaches the bottom of the thread it is the right size. If the needle does not make it to the bottom, the needle is too small for the thread.

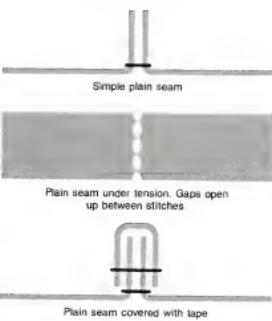
Plain seams are easiest to sew, even if the fabric is thick or is cut in curved shapes, but even a small strain across a plain seam will cause small holes to open up between individual stitches, allowing water to seep through. Also, since all the strain is taken along a single line, plain seams are relatively weak. Using tape to cover the seam will decrease seepage as well as protecting raw fabric edges from fraying. Plain seams are far from ideal but are often used on clothing and for the main seams of rucksacks where better seams would be too difficult or impossible to sew.

French seams are essentially plain seams stitched twice to protect the fabric edges. Apart from this they suffer from all of the disadvantages of plain seams.

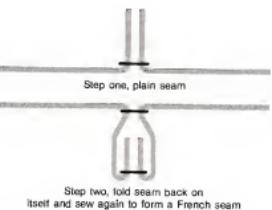
Simple flat seams are usually almost as easy to sew as plain seams. They are an improvement in that strain is now spread over two lines of stitching and the seam, being stronger, is less likely to open under tension. Theoretically, any seam can be

# Seams

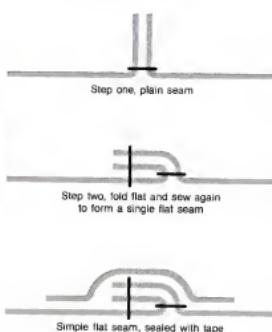
## Plain Seams



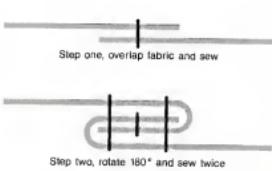
## French Seam



## Simple Flat Seam



## Rolled Flat Seam



thoroughly sealed by gluing tape over it, but unless the seam will lie flat, taping can be difficult and frustrating. A simple flat seam is the easiest to seal in this way.

By far the best seam to use is the rolled flat seam. Strain is taken by two lines of stitching, both through four thicknesses of material. It will not open under tension and is the strongest, most waterproof type of seam. Rolled flat seams are especially well suited to lightweight proofed fabrics and should be used, whenever possible, for tent seams. But be warned, you will need quite a lot of practice before you can sew a neat rolled flat seam on light, stretchy, slippery tent fly fabric.

On the aesthetic side, try to co-ordinate the colours you use. This might sound obvious, but because outdoor fabrics are difficult to find, home-made gear is often put together with the best obtainable in a hurried Saturday morning. Forest green nylon, bright blue canvas, yellow Cordura, white buckles and, to set it all off, hot pink climbing tape might very well add up to a functional day pack. On the other hand, it might look more like a rosella that didn't make it through the mincer alive.

Making your own outdoor gear can be a lot of fun and it can save you money. But

making the 'ideal' pair of overpants can take up more time than you might expect. So rather than planning to make everything, it is best to concentrate on making gear that isn't commercially available.

Be prepared for a few disappointments. Things seldom turn out right on the first attempt. Learning how to make your own gear will involve some effort and a few mistakes.

Finally, at the risk of sounding a bit pretentious, making your own gear can also be a rewarding vehicle for self-expression. I like to think that my tents are not only functional, but beautiful.

## Sources and Prices of Materials

**Thread** Coats Koban 25 or 36, about \$2/bone (approx 2,000 metres), from Coats (Victoria) or some haberdasheries. **Cordura**, \$15-\$25/metre (1.524 metres wide), from the USA (REI and other mail-order businesses; watch out for import duty), some local bushwalking shops (usually expensive) or local gear manufacturers. **Canvas**, about \$15/metre (1.829 metres wide), from canvas retailers. **Light proofed nylon**, about \$6/metre. Unproofed nylon, about \$6/metre (usually only about 76 centimetres wide), from sailmakers. **Aluminium tubing**, about \$3/metre for 6061-T6 and about \$9/metre for 2024-T3, from Moorabbin Aircraft Spares (Victoria) or some aircraft parts distributors in other States. (Note that a tube wall thickness of 28 or 35 thousandths of an inch is usually adequate.)

Mustang in Kathmandu — Photo: B. Hall

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Jutta Hosel

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enthusiasts this summer!  
Left, crossing the Tooma  
River, Snowy Mountains,  
New South Wales. Right,  
'giving it a burf' at  
Croajingolong, Victoria.



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Cascade Mountain Jacket  
a mountain parka with  
Gore-Tex performance

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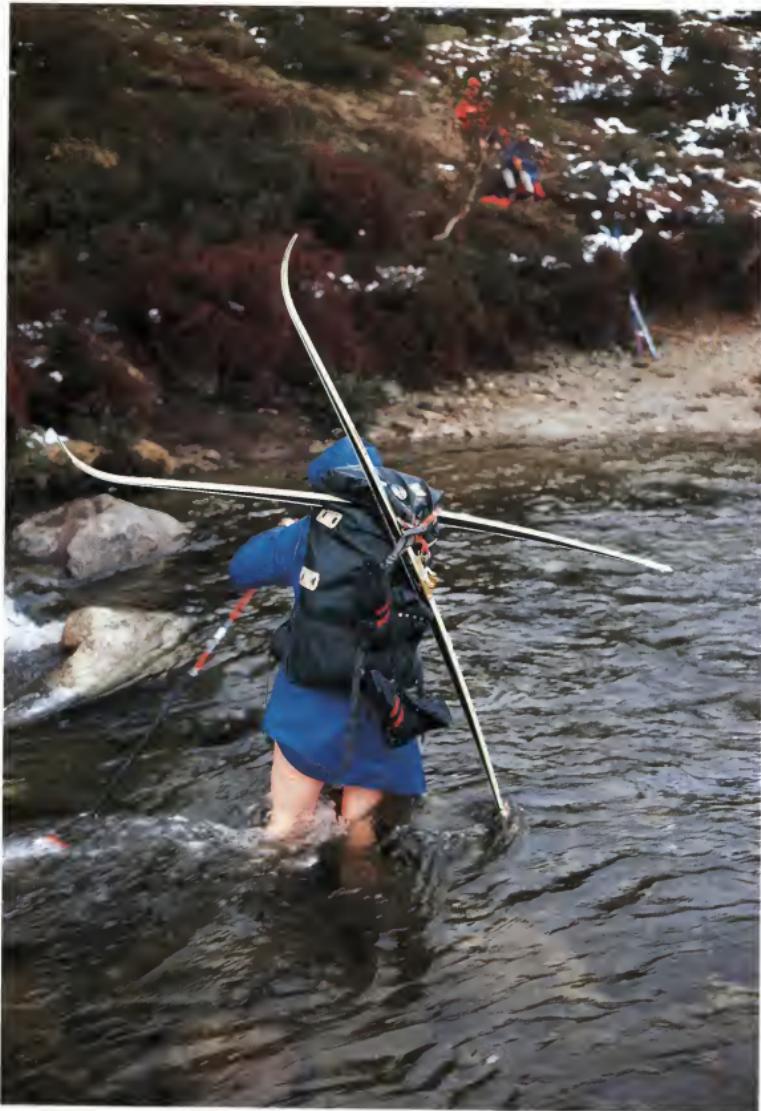
#### Under-arm zips

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Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL.



Crossing the Geehi  
River, Snowy Mountains.

Jutta Hessel (see Contributors in this issue) has been a regular contributor to Wild since our first issue. Her outstanding wilderness photography appears in many books and magazines.

## New Zealand's Rees and Dart Valleys

Walking a wonderland, by Chris Baxter.



● THE REES AND DART VALLEYS IN NEW ZEALAND'S Mt Aspiring National Park have long been popular as a round trip for bushwalking (or for tramping, as New Zealanders call it). The area is not well known to Australian walkers but it would serve as an ideal introduction to those who decide to cross the Tasman for a walking holiday.

The Rees-Dart walk fortunately lacks, as yet, the commercialism of the world-renowned Milford Track and is less crowded than the nearby Routeburn Track. Many walkers consider it quite as interesting as either of these walks, or as the Hollyford Track, and not a great deal more demanding. The Rees-Dart walk is not well developed, by New Zealand standards, and is suitable for those with limited bushwalking experience. The country is largely unspoiled, the scenery varied and spectacular.

The track is generally well-marked and navigation is not a problem. There are several superior huts at strategic intervals and no significant hills to climb. All major creek and river crossings have suspension bridges.

Amazingly, the complete walk has been done in a day, but most walkers will prefer to take three or four so that they can make the most of the river flats, forest and tussock grass (of the high country around Rees Saddle), and the

views of the many snow-covered peaks that present an inspiring and constantly changing display. The walk can be tackled in either direction, but it is most commonly started up the Rees Valley because this is generally reckoned to be easier. This is the way these notes describe.

**Access.** 'Base camp' for this walk is the sleepy hamlet of Glenorchy at the northern end of Lake Wakatipu and 47 kilometres north of the substantial tourist town, Queenstown. Glenorchy, nestling almost in the shadow of magnificent Mt Earnslaw (2,819 metres), has the great advantage of being reached by a road the condition of which deters hordes of tourists. Walkers in the area must leave details of their intended route at the Glenorchy Ranger Station (on the left as you enter the 'town' from Queenstown). This is also a good place to get up-to-date information on the track. As well as a store, pub and petrol station, Glenorchy has an excellent camping ground which is a good place to meet other walkers, including those who have just done the Rees-Dart walk and, more importantly (for reasons shortly to be revealed), those about to do it.

While the walk is described as a 'round-trip', the road-head in the Dart valley, at Paradise homestead, is a long and trying day's walk from

that in the Rees valley, normally at Muddy Creek. Most people, wisely, go to some trouble to avoid the 'road bash' between these two points. (Hitch-hiking is not a good prospect on two dead-end roads.) If you are unable to arrange a car shuffle, a local taxi service operates between Glenorchy and the two road-heads. (Walkers commonly arrange for the taxi to follow them in their car to the road-head at Paradise then, once they have left their car there, drive them to Muddy Creek.) This service can be arranged through the Glenorchy garage or the office at the camping ground. While the charge is not exorbitant, taxis are seldom cheap and it is a good idea to first locate other walkers in the camping ground with similar plans, and budgets, with whom to share the taxi.

A bus service (H&H buses) runs between Queenstown and the Routeburn Track daily in summer (at least twice a week in other seasons). It is said to set down at Paradise on request.

The road leads north from Glenorchy. After about six kilometres it forks, the right-hand branch heading up the Rees and the left (after another fork, a kilometre from the first, to the Routeburn Track) up the Dart.

**When to visit.** Summer is the most appropriate time. Even then Rees Saddle can be covered in deep snow after a sudden change in the weather. Under these conditions the section of the walk between Shelter Rock Hut and Dart Hut could be potentially dangerous for inexperienced and/or ill-equipped parties.

**Special equipment.** Whilst sandals may be adequate for most of the walk, boots may be more appropriate for Rees Saddle, particularly if there is snow about.

Because of the number of huts in the area, a tent is not essential, but it may be as well to carry one in case you are forced to stop for the night before reaching a hut, or in the unlikely (but quite possible) event of over-crowding.

A stove and fuel are desirable because firewood is scarce.

Clothing should be appropriate for New Zealand alpine conditions which, of course, can be both cold and wet.

Ice axes or crampons are not necessary under normal conditions.

**Maps.** The 1:150,000 scale Mount Aspiring National Park map published by the New Zealand Department of Lands and Survey is quite adequate and generally available. Note, however, that it still shows the old location of Shelter Rock Hut. The correct location is shown on the sketch map in the free leaflet describing the Rees-Dart walk, available at the Ranger Station on the Rees River below Mt Earnslaw and, above, on Cattle Flat beside the Dart River. Chris Baxter



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Station in Glenorchy. This leaflet is most helpful.

**Track notes.** Recommended daily stages are Muddy Creek - Shelter Rock Hut, Shelter Rock Hut - Dart Hut, Dart Hut - Daleys Flat Hut, and Daleys Flat Hut - Paradise.

#### Muddy Creek — Shelter Rock Hut

The road ends abruptly at a rough parking area beside Muddy Creek, but a good jeep track continues up the east side of the Rees valley in a generally northerly direction. Cross the creek and follow this track until it drops down and eventually loses itself on the open river flats. There is then often a distinct track to follow and it is necessary to alternate between the easy but sometimes swampy river flats and the steep grassy terraces immediately above them. Navigation is not a problem because you have only to follow upstream the eastern bank of the mighty Rees River.

A number of small tributaries to the Rees offer no serious obstacles. A little upstream on one of the bigger ones, 25 Mile Hut nestles invisible from the river flats. Mt Earnslaw towers above, over the river.

Almost imperceptibly the flats narrow between the walls of the valley and the forest comes in to greet you. The track is very distinct where it enters the forest at the signposted National Park boundary and is well worth locating before you plunge into the forest — it is only about 50 metres from the river.

Within the forest the contrast with the warmth, light and openness of the morning's walk is as dramatic as the new terrain. The valley has narrowed and steepened appreciably and the river is suddenly a raging adolescent in its boulder-choked chasm.

The track soon makes an alarming turn towards the river but fortunately a suspension bridge, albeit a rather dramatic one, appears just in time to carry you across the maelstrom below. Once on the western bank, the well-marked track continues upstream by a surprisingly long and steady climb which leads, at times, to the very bank of the river.

The track bursts dramatically from the forest into tussock grass country near Clarke Slip, an enormous rockfall. The setting is breath-taking; ahead stands a cirque of jagged snowy sentinels which appear to block all progress, but the track continues through an alpine garden and clusters of jagged boulders, still climbing.

Shelter Rock Hut is not where it is shown on the map. The old hut has been pulled down and an excellent new one has been built a kilometre or so further on; on the other (eastern) side of the river. A sturdy suspension bridge leads to this comfortable haven, which is about seven hours' walk from Muddy Creek.

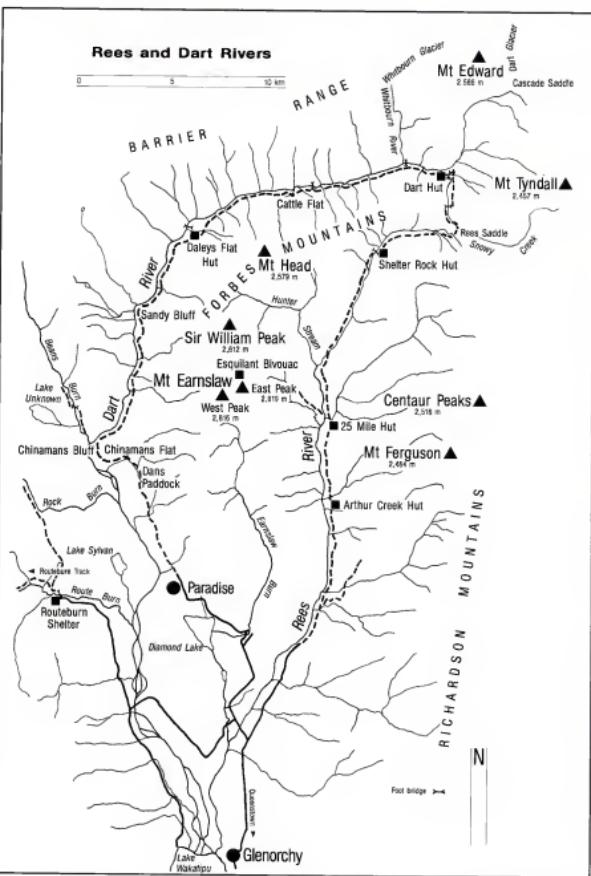
#### Shelter Rock Hut — Dart Hut

From the hut, pick up the track along the east bank of the river. It climbs through low scrub to a ridge 100 metres above the river then swings east and sidles down to the river which is now in a tussock grass basin and only a gurgling mountain stream. Follow the river on intermittent tracks marked with cairns, to end up on its northern bank beneath Rees Saddle (1,447 metres).

The climb up to the saddle is short and sharp, by a track close against the cliffs on the left. There is often snow on this section and care should be taken. The view from the saddle reveals a new and enchanting panorama of the peaks at the head of the Dart valley.

The track shoots off down to the north-west through steep tussock grass. It is easy to follow and marked with stakes, but requires care as it is steep and precipitous and can also be muddy or even snow-covered.

A suspension bridge leads to the eastern side of Snowy Creek (a tributary of the Dart) and a



further steep, rough descent to the Dart River where another suspension bridge leads back across Snowy Creek to Dart Hut and the end of a short but demanding day.

(For those with time and energy to spare, many walkers make the long day trip from the hut up the Dart to Cascade Saddle with its magnificent views of Mt Aspiring. Check Dart Hut log book for details of the route.)

#### Dart Hut — Daleys Flat Hut

It is 22 kilometres between these huts, all of it on a well-defined track following the south side of the majestic Dart River.

Several kilometres of forest walking lead to Cattle Flat, a clearing four kilometres long. Just over half-way down the flat, a sign and markers lead to the Cattle Flat bivvy rock, a few minutes into the forest. The track leaves the western end of Cattle Flat through a gate.

Magnificent forest walking on a well-marked track leads to Daleys Flat and its substantial hut.

#### Daleys Flat Hut — Paradise

With 26 kilometres to cover, this is an even longer walk than that of the previous day. If anything, however, the walking is more interesting. Again, navigation is not a problem as the track is generally well-defined and follows

the east side of the river. Care should be taken, however, to locate the track whenever it re-enters the forest from the river flats where the track is less defined. Track markers are generally in abundance, particularly at these points.

The 90 metre climb up Sandy Bluff is very steep and in one place is even equipped with a ladder and cable! The climb is rewarded with views of the river through the trees — the Dart is now both a beautiful and sobering sight. Just south of the descent from Sandy Bluff is a marked rock bivvy shelter.

More forest walking alternating with river flats leads round Chinamans Bluff to the top of Chinamans Flat by the river, where a sign and markers lead to another rock bivvy shelter.

The track now becomes a well-defined jeep track and turns inland, passing through the clearing of Dams Paddock on its way to the first paddock of Paradise. Here it is not always clear but it is probably best to follow the edge of the bush until a marked route can be found leading to the cattle yards near the end of the road. •

Chris Baxter is editor and publisher of *Wild*. Last summer he and his wife, Sue (pictured in this article), walked the Rees and Dart valleys on their honeymoon!



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Tom C. Hall in his  
Gore-tex wind-suit at  
Camp Two on the  
North Face of  
Mt Everest. Photo Tim  
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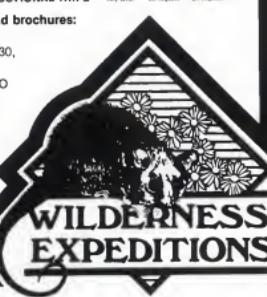
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# Wild Adventure Activities Survey Canoeing and Rafting

## Selecting the Right Trip

• MANY PEOPLE LIKE THE IDEA OF TRAVELLING down a river. It has an allure all of its own. Some people want to relax and enjoy leisurely camping; others might want to see remote wilderness areas and experience the excitement of shooting rapids. Many people simply want a holiday with a difference.

Some people may not know how to go about organizing such a trip. They don't have the equipment, the know-how, or enough like-minded companions to make up a group. And they often don't have the time or the inclination to learn how to paddle a canoe, and then become proficient, in order to see a particular area.

This is where the commercial operators come in. They have done all the homework, have guides and equipment, and offer a variety of venues and options — within a wide price range.

This survey makes no attempt to assess the attributes of the different tour operators, or their individual tours. The wide range of tours is designed to appeal to different markets.

Although not all tour operators specify that their clients must be able to swim, I feel that is an essential prerequisite before anyone contemplates one of these tours.

The qualifications of the tour guides are varied. Some have Australian Canoe Federation Instructor Awards, some have outdoor recreation/physical education diplomas, and some quote extensive experience.

Intending clients should satisfy themselves that the guides are qualified to lead the trip. Your

life could depend on the skill and experience of your guide. People have drowned on commercial trips on at least three rivers.

The amount of instruction given varies according to the description of the tour. But all tours offer basic paddling and river-reading skills. Many tour operators say that instruction is ongoing, and that the amount depends on the individual's preference.

If instruction and an introduction to canoeing is sought, it would be worth investigating local clubs. Most canoe clubs welcome beginners, and will give them basic instruction. Some have club boats/equipment which they hire out very cheaply. A list of clubs can be obtained from State Canoe Associations and State Sport/Recreation Departments.

The range and quality of equipment supplied may vary. It would be a good idea to check this before committing yourself to a particular tour. Most tour operators give out detailed equipment lists upon booking, so you know what is provided, and what they recommend you to take.

On white water trips during the colder months, wetsuits and wetboots and water/wind-resistant jackets make the trip much more comfortable. Sleeping bags, wetsuits and wetboots are not provided unless they are specifically mentioned in the 'accommodation, equipment and meals provided' column of the accompanying table. If the tour operator doesn't provide these, you must decide whether to hire them or to improvise with some alternatives. Some tour operators have an equipment hire section, which can sometimes save a lot of time

and inconvenience.

Extras, like spending the final night in an hotel, having wine with meals, the security of a two-way radio system, having transport provided from a major population centre and so on, can be important to people. (In the 'accommodation, equipment and meals provided' column of the accompanying table, indoor accommodation is always referred to as 'hotel accom').

People intending to go on trips should make their own enquiries regarding insurance. Appropriate insurance is important on all trips, and essential on wilderness trips, where accidents could prove to be very expensive indeed. As well, intending clients should satisfy themselves as far as possible that the tour is suitable for them. Making comparisons, talking to the tour operator, and asking other people about their experiences will help to eliminate disappointments later. When considering the cost of a trip, add up hiring and insurance costs, where applicable, and the cost of reaching the meeting point.

In addition, make specific enquiries regarding cancellation conditions. If the tour operator cancels a trip for any reason, all moneys paid by the client are usually refunded.

Once the assessment and deliberation are behind you, and you have paid your deposit, you can relax. Everything else is out of your hands. All you have to do is look forward to the trip. •

*Yvonne McLaughlin* is WAA's contributing editor for canoeing. She has been paddling for eight years and is an instructor with the Victorian Board of Canoe Education.

## Wild Adventure Activities Survey Canoeing and Rafting

Tour	Prerequisites	Venue	Starting dates	Type of craft	Accommodation, equipment, meals provided	Leader/client ratio	Max number of clients	Duration (days)	Deposits/Withdrawal nearest \$ conditions	Price
<b>Access to Adventure</b> 220A Sheffield House 713 Hay Street Mall Perth WA 6000, phone (09) 321 2630 (Directors: Fiona Baskin). Years of operation: 2										
<b>Avon Valley Day Trip</b> Introduction to white water rafting	Must be able to swim.	Avon River, WA	Weekends June-Sep	Avon rafts	Rafting equipment, lunch	15	10	1	\$50	Less than 14 days - \$70 ex Walungas any's discretion
<b>Blackwood Expeditions</b> As above	Introduction to canoe expeditions	Blackwood River, WA	1 June, 13 Jul, 31 Aug, 21 Sept, 26 Oct	Open Canadian Canoes	Canoeing and camping equipment, all meals	15	10	3	\$50	More than 14 days - \$20 fee
<b>Float Plane Wilderness Adventures</b> As above	Adventure. Wilderness holiday	Old River, WA	18 May, 31 Aug	Floating Plane Canoes	Canoeing and camping equipment, all meals	15	10	6	\$50	As above
<b>Adventure Travel</b> , 117 York Street Sydney NSW 2000, phone (02) 264 6033 (Directors: Chris Dewhurst, Gerry Vire). Years of operation: 5										
<b>Franklin River World Heritage</b> . White water rafting	Outdoor experience desirable. Over 16 years, or over 12 years with responsible adult.	Franklin River, Tasmania	Each Sat, Jan-Mar	Metezeer rafts	Rafting and camping equipment, all meals	14	8	10	\$200	Graduated cancellation fees
<b>Herbert River White Water Rafting</b> . White water rafting	Outdoors-oriented people, preferably with river experience	Herbert River, Qld	25 May, 8, 22 June, 6 Jul	Metezeer or Avon rafts	As above	14	8	10	\$200	As above
<b>Snowy River White Water</b> . White water rafting	Over 12 years. Be able to swim.	Snowy River, Vic	Each Sat Oct-Dec	As above	As above	14	12	6	\$200	As above
<b>Australian Himalayan Expeditions</b> , 159 Cathedral Street Woolloomooloo NSW 2011, phone (02) 357 3555 (Directors: Christine Gee, Gordon Price). Years of operation: 9										
<b>Jaws of the Murray</b> . White water rafting — often wild water	Must be able to swim, and be physically fit.	Murray River, NSW	Oct and Nov 18 departures	Variety of Avon Rafting and camping equipment, all meals	14	12	3	\$215	Less than 14 days - \$100 fee 14-28 days - \$100 fee	
<b>Franklin Rafting Expedition</b> . White water rafting — difficult grade	Must be able to swim, be physically fit and healthy and have previous outdoor experience	Franklin River, Tas	1, 4, 13, 16, 25, Avon Scout 29 Jan, 12 Feb, 2, 6, 20, 24, Mar	Avon Scout rafts	As above	13	6	10	\$50	\$100 fee 28 days or more - \$50 fee
<b>Nymboida River Rafting</b> . White water rafting — medium grade	Must be able to swim and be physically fit.	Nymboida River, NSW	Jan-May 25 departures	Variety of Avon As above plus 1 night hotel accom	15	15	6	\$50	As above	
<b>Snowy River Rafting</b> . White water rafting — easy grade	Must be able to swim.	Snowy River, Vic	7, 16, 26 Jan, 2, 16 Feb, 2, 16 Mar, 30 Mar, 13 Apr, Oct	Avon Redshank Rafting and camping equipment, all meals	13	6	6	\$50	As above	
<b>Week and Kayak School</b> . Kayak instruction on flat and moving water	As above	Murrambridge River NSW and Wilsons Promontory, Vic	5, 19 Jan, 2, Feb, 2, 16 Mar, 30 Mar, 13 Apr, Oct	Kayaks, sea kayaks	Kayaking and camping equipment, all meals	13	8	2	\$155	\$155 ex Yass \$155 ex Wilsons Promontory

# Wild Adventure Activities Survey Canoeing and Rafting

Tour	Prerequisites	Venue	Starting dates	Type of craft	Accommodation, equipment, meals provided	Leader-client ratio	Max number of clients	Duration (days)	Deposits	Withdrawal nearest \$ conditions	Price
<b>Weak and White Water.</b> As above Introduction to white water rafting		Murramburgh River, NSW and Mitchell River, Vic	Every weekend Jan to 20 Apr; recommence Oct	Avon Redshark Rafts and camping equipment, all meals	1:4	12	2	\$135	As above	\$135 ex Yass \$135 ex Melbourne	
<b>Camping Adventures.</b> 6 Jones Avenue Warner Bay NSW 2282, phone (049) 48 9145 (Manager: Ray Dean). Years of operation: 4											
<b>Barrington River Canoeing Adventure.</b> Canoeing instruction and enjoyment.	Must be over 12 years of age and able to swim.	Barrington River, NSW	Every second Sat, Oct-May	Canadian canoes	Canoeing and camping equipment, all meals	na	16	2	\$120	Graduated cancellation fees.	\$120 ex Newcastle
<b>River Exploration.</b> As above		Rivers adjacent to Barrington Tops, NSW	14 Jan, 11 Feb, As above 14 Mar, 22 Apr, 6 May		As above	1:8	16	5	\$200	As above	\$315 ex Newcastle
<b>Canoe Tours Australia Pty Ltd.</b> 6 Barton Court Bourke Street Barton ACT 2600, phone (062) 73 3983 (Manager: Jonathan Doyle). Years of operation: 10											
<b>Macleay River Canoeing Holiday.</b> Canoeing and camping holiday.	Must be over age 11	Macleay River, NSW	4, 11, 18, 25 Feb	Open Canadian canoes	1:8	12	5	\$60	\$10 cancellation fee	\$350 ex Kempsey	
<b>Murrumbidgee/Tumut Rivers Canoeing Holiday.</b> Canoeing and camping holiday.	As above	Murrumbidgee River, NSW	Each Sat, Jan-Apr	As above	1 night hotel accom	1:6	12	6	\$60	As above	\$390 ex Gundagai
<b>Nymboida River (Lower).</b> As above		Nymboida River, NSW	20 Jan, 18, 25 Mar, 29 Apr, 6 May		As above	1:6	12	5	\$60	As above	\$350 ex Grafton
<b>Nymboida River (Upper).</b> As above		Nymboida River (upper), NSW	7, 14, 28 Jan, 4, 11 Mar, 8, 15, 22 Apr, 13, 20 May	Rubber rafts	As above	1:6	11	5	\$60	As above	\$360 ex Grafton
<b>Snowy River Rafting Holiday.</b> Rafting and camping holiday.	As above	Snowy River, Vic	Oct-Nov	As above	As above	1:6	11	6	\$60	As above	\$360 ex Bairnsdale
<b>Nymboah Whitemill Whitewater Rafting Expeditions.</b> PO Box 224 Wootgoola NSW 2450, phone (066) 54 1788 (Manager: Arthur Stade). Years of operation: na											
<b>Nymboah Whitemill Rafting Expedition.</b> White water rafting	Must be over age 12 years and able to swim.	Nymboida River, NSW	Each Sat, Nov-May	Avon rafts	Rafting and camping equipment, all meals	1:6	18	6	\$200	As above	\$330 ex Coffs Harbour
<b>Pandanus Canoe Safaris.</b> GPO Box 1486 Darwin NT 5794, phone (089) 85 3475 (Manager: Detmer Riedel). Years of operation: 9											
<b>Daly River Canoe Safari.</b> Relaxed canoeing	Must be able to swim.	Daly River, NT	First and third Sats, May-Oct	Canadian canoes	Canoeing and camping equipment (incl sleeping bag), all meals	1:5	10	6	\$200	As above	\$395 ex Darwin
<b>Richardson Bros.</b> PO Box 29 Cook ACT 2614, phone (062) 49 7555 (Manager: Clive Richardson). Years of operation: 5											
<b>River Rafting.</b> Relaxing rafting holiday.	None.	Murrumbidgee, WeeWod, Jam-Tumut, Murray River, NSW	Metzeler Mammut rafts	Rafting and camping equipment, all meals	1:4	12	2-4	\$50	Less than 14 days - 50% fee, 14 or more days full refund	\$50 per day ex Canberra	
<b>White Water Canoeing.</b> None. Introduction to white water canoeing. For beginners/internates.		Murrumbidgee, WeeWod, River, NSW	Jan-Mar	Newhall inflatable canoes	Canoeing and camping equipment, all meals	1:5	10	1-2	\$50	As above	
<b>White Water Rafting.</b> Must be physically fit. Rafting holiday.	As above	Murrumbidgee River, NSW	Jan-Nov	Metzeler Mammut rafts	Rafting equipment, lunch	1:6	12	1	\$50	As above	As above
<b>Riverland Canoeing Adventures.</b> PO Box 952 London SA 5333, phone (085) 84 7919 (Manager: Grant Brown). Years of operation: 1											
<b>Explorer Canoe Tours.</b> Canoe touring.	Must be able to swim.	Murray River, various creeks, SA/VC	21 Jan, 4, 18 Feb	Canadian canoes and double kayaks	Canoeing and camping equipment, all meals	1:14	14	5	\$18	Full refund	\$180 ex Wentworth
<b>Sea Kayak Experience Co.</b> 6 Klays Avenue Toorak Vic 3142, phone (03) 241 5697 (Managers: George Pomper, Robert Mitchell). Years of operation: 2											
<b>Port Phillip Bay Sea Kayak Introduction.</b> Sea kayaking instruction and exploration.	Must be reasonably fit.	Port Phillip Bay, Vic	Week-ends Jan-Apr	Icetice sea kayaks	Kayaking equipment, lunch	1:4	7	1	0	Less than 7 days - 10% fee, 7 or more days full refund	\$45 ex Mornington
<b>Wilsons Promontory Sea Kayak End.</b> Sea kayaking instruction and exploration	As above	Wilsons Promontory, Vic	As above	As above	Kayaking and camping equipment, all meals	1:3	8	2	0	As above	\$125 ex Wilsons Promontory
<b>Snowy River Expeditions.</b> PO Buchan Vic 3885, phone (051) 55 9373 (Director: Robert Coates). Years of operation: 3											
<b>Snowy River Rafting Expedition.</b> Relaxing rafting holiday - easy grade	None.	Snowy River, Vic	19 Jan, 2, 23 Feb, 16 Mar	Newhall inflatable rafts canoes	Rafting, canoeing and camping equipment, all meals	1:4	10	6	\$50	Less than 28 days - negotiable fee 28 or more days - \$50 fee	\$330 ex Buchan
As above	None.	As above	25 Jan, 15 Feb, As above 8 Mar		As above	1:4	10	4	\$50	As above	\$240 ex Buchan
<b>Victorian Board of Canoe Education.</b> 140 Cobham Road Kew Vic 3101, phone (03) 80 6030 (Executive Officer: Cary Pedicini). Years of operation: 10											
<b>Canoeing Holiday Camps.</b> Basic canoeing and safety instruction for canoe touring.	Must be over age 14.	Goulburn River, 8, 15 Jan Vic	Canadian canoes and kayaks	Canoeing and kayaking equipment	1:6	24	4	\$55	Less than 14 days - \$110 ex Eldon - no refund unless replacement found, then full refunds; 14 or more days full refund	\$110 ex Eldon	
<b>Whitewater World.</b> PO Box 15 Stratphine Old 4500, phone (07) 205 2088 (Manager: Joe Walsh). Years of operation: 5											
<b>Canoe Tours and Expeditions.</b> To introduce people to the outdoors via canoes/kayaks.	None.	Waters of SE Old	Every week-end	Canadian canoes and kayaks	Canoeing, kayaking and camping equipment, all meals	1:8	23	2	\$14	Less than 14 days - no refund - 14 or more days full refund.	\$55 ex Brisbane

Tour	Prerequisites	Venue	Starting dates	Type of craft	Accommodation, equipment, meals provided	Leader: client ratio	Max number of clients	Duration (days)	Deposits nearest \$ conditions	Withdrawal	Price
<b>Wilderness Expeditions</b> , 26 Sharp Street Cooma NSW 2630, phone (0648) 21 587 (Manager: Steve Colman). Years of operation: 8											
<b>Intensive White Water Instruction.</b> To teach people all aspects of rafting — moderate grade	Must be over age 14.	Upper Murray River, NSW	24 Sept. 22 Oct. 12 Nov	Avon rafts	Rating and camping equipment, all meals 1 night hotel accom	1:3	9	5	\$100	Less than 14 days - 50% refund of total trip cost if the place is resold. 14-30 days - 50% refund of total trip cost. More than 30 days - 50% of deposit refunded.	\$345 ex Cooma
<b>Kayak thru Murumbidgees.</b> Easy to moderate. Easy grades.	Must be reasonably fit and able to swim.	Murumbidgee River, NSW	12 Jan, 9 Feb	Kayaks	Kayaking and camping equipment, all meals	1:4	9	2	\$100	150 ex Canberra	
<b>Learn to Kayak Week-ends.</b> Easy grades.	As above	Murumbidgee River, NSW	5, 19, 26 Jan, 16 Mar	Kayaks	As above	1:4	10	2	\$100	145 ex Yass	
<b>Murumbidgees Rafting.</b> As above	White water rafting — easy grade	Murumbidgee River, NSW	5, 12, 19, 26 Jan, 2, 9, 16, 23 Feb, 9, 16 Mar	Avon rafts	Rating and camping equipment, all meals	1:3	9	2	\$100	145 ex Yass	
<b>Nymboida Rafting.</b> As above	White water rafting — moderate grade.	Nymboida River, NSW	Each Sunday Jan-May	Avon rafts	As above	1:5	8	6	\$100	As above	\$355 ex Coffs Harbour
<b>Safely Down The Snowy</b> As above		Snowy River, Vic	13 Jan, 14 Apr	Inflatable canoes	Camping and camping equipment, all meals	1:5	9	6	\$100	As above	\$355 ex Cooma
<b>The Upper Murray.</b> White as above Prior experience with rafting often very useful.		Murray River, Vic	12, 26 Jan, 15 Mar, 6 Apr	Avon rafts	Rating and camping equipment, all meals	1:3	9	3	\$100	As above	\$220 ex Cooma
<b>White Water Kayaking Course.</b> Easy to moderate grade.	Must be reasonably fit and able to swim.	Murumbidgee River, NSW	7, 21 Jan, 11, 25 Feb	Kayaks	Kayaking and camping equipment, all meals	1:4	10	5	\$100	As above	\$335 ex Yass
<b>White Water Week-ends.</b> As above Canoe touring.		Murumbidgee River, NSW	5, 19, 26 Jan, 2, 16 Feb, 30 Mar	Canoing and camping equipment, all meals	1:5	9	2	\$100	As above	\$145 ex Bredbo	
<b>Wilderness Kayaking the Snowy River.</b> Extended kayak touring.	As above	Snowy River, NSW	5 Mar, 4 Apr	Kayaks	Kayaking and camping equipment, all meals	1:4	9	6	\$100	As above	\$355 ex Cooma
<b>Wildrek Ltd</b> 9th floor 343 Little Collins Street Melbourne Vic 3000, phone (03) 67 7196 (Director: Andrew Marshall). Years of operation: 8											
<b>Franklin River.</b> Prior outdoor experience recommended. Health questionnaire to be completed		Franklin River, Frenchmans Cap, Tas	10 Feb., 18 Mar	Avon Rats	Rating and camping equipment (incl wetsuits and boots), all mealswine, Flying doctor radio, 2 nights hotel accom	1:4	8	14	\$75	Less than 16 days - 50% total trip cost. 16-30 days - 50% refund of total trip cost if the place is resold. 16-30 days - 50% refund of total trip cost. 31-45 days \$75 More than 45 days \$25	\$965 ex Hobart
As above	As above	Franklin River, Tas	8, 27 Dec, 4, 12, 27 Jan, 21 Feb	As above	Rating and camping equipment, all mealswine, Flying doctor radio, 2 nights hotel accom	1:4	8	12	\$75		\$895 ex Hobart
As above	As above	Lower-Franklin River, Tas	20, 31 Jan, 11 Feb, 8 Mar, 3 Apr	As above	As above	1:4	8	7	\$75		\$745 ex Hobart
<b>Goulburn River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	Health questionnaire	Goulburn River, Vic	5, 12, 19, 26 Jan, 2, 9, 16, 23 Feb, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Mar	As above	Rating and camping equipment, all mealswine	1:8	16	2	\$75		\$135 ex Thornton
<b>Herbert River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	Prior outdoor experience recommended. Health questionnaire	Herbert River, Old	5, 21, Apr, 7, 23 May, 8, 24 June, 10 Jul	As above	Rating and camping equipment, all mealswine Flying doctor radio, 1 night hotel accom	1:5	10	12	\$75	As above	\$825 ex Cairns
<b>Macquarie River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	Health questionnaire	Macquarie River, NSW	12, 26 Oct, 9, 23 Nov, 7, Oct	As above	Rating and camping equipment, all mealswine	1:8	16	2	\$75	As above	\$155 ex Sydney
<b>Manning River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	As above	Manning River, NSW	5, 19 Oct, 2, 16, 30 Nov, 14, 21 Dec	As above	As above	1:8	16	2	\$75	As above	\$155 ex Sydney
<b>Mitchell River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	As above	Mitchell River, Vic	7, 21 Jan, 5 Apr, 30 Sept, 21 Oct, 11, 25 Nov, 10 Jul	As above	Rating and camping equipment (incl wetsuits and boots), all mealswine, Flying doctor radio	1:8	16	5	\$75	As above	\$295 ex Stratford
<b>Mitta Mitta River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	As above	Mitta Mitta River, Vic	Every week-end June-Nov.	As above	Rating and camping equipment (incl wetsuits and boots), all mealswine	1:8	16	2	\$75	As above	\$175 ex Omeo
<b>Murray Gates.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	Prior outdoor experience recommended. Health questionnaire	Upper Murray River, NSW	5, 12, 19, 26 Oct, 2, 9, 16, 23 Nov	As above	As above plus flying doctor radio	1:4	8	3	\$75	As above	\$235 ex Khancoban
<b>Murray River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	Health questionnaire	Middle Murray River, NSW	14, 28 Jan, 11, As above 25 Feb, 25 Mar 5 Apr, 20 May, 9 Sept, 14 Oct, 4, 18 Nov, 2, 16, 28 Dec	As above	Rating and camping equipment, all mealswine, 1 night hotel accom	1:8	16	5	\$75	As above	\$295 ex Yarrawonga
<b>Murumbidgees River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	As above	Murumbidgee River, NSW	5, 12, 19, 26 Jan, 2, 9, 16, 23 Feb, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Mar	As above	Rating and camping equipment, all mealswine	1:8	16	2	\$75	As above	\$135 ex Yass
<b>Nymboida River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	As above	Nymboida River, NSW	22 departures Jan-May, 27 Oct, 3, 10, 17 24 Nov, 1, 8, 15, 22 Dec	Avon rafts	Rating and camping equipment, all mealswine, Flying doctor radio, 1 night hotel accom	1:5	15	6	\$75	As above	\$355 ex Coffs Harbour
<b>Snowy River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	As above	Snowy River, Vic	6, 13, 20, 27 Jan, 17 Feb, 10 Mar, 21 Apr, 12 May, 1, 22 Sept, 1, 8, 15 Oct, 3, 10, 17, 24 Nov, 1, 8, 15, 27 Dec	As above	Rating and camping equipment (including wetsuits, May-Nov), all mealswine, Flying doctor radio	1:8	16	7	\$75	As above	\$355 ex Buchan
<b>Tully River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	As above	Tully River, Old	Daily 1 Apr- 30 Sept	As above	Rating equipment, lunch	1:8	16	1	\$55	As above	\$55 ex Cairns
<b>Tumut River.</b> Outdoor education holiday.	As above	Tumut River, NSW	6, 13, 20, Jan, 3, 17 Feb, 10, 17, 24 Mar, 5 Apr, 3, 10, 17, 24 Nov, 1, 8, 15, 28 Dec	As above	Rating and camping equipment, all mealswine, 1 night hotel accom	1:8	16	5	\$75	As above	\$295 ex Gundagai



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# Reviews

**Alpine Australia Calendar 1985** (Harry Nankin, RRP \$9.95). **Contemplation Calendar 1985** (Peter Ewing Photography, RRP \$6.00). **High Exposure 1985** (North Star Press, RRP \$US8.98 including post from PO Box 646, Sandy Utah 84091, USA). **New Zealand Alpine Calendar 1985** (Betty and Colin Monteath, RRP \$7.95). **Tasmania and Wilderness Flight Calendar 1985** (England Calendars, RRP \$6.50). **Victoria's National Parks Calendar 1985** (Victorian National Parks Association, RRP \$6.95). **Wilderness Australia Calendar 1985** (Robert Rankin Publishing, RRP \$7.45). **Wilderness Calendar 1985** (Peter Dombrowski, RRP \$7.50). **1985 Wilderness New South Wales** (Kallianna Press, RRP \$6.95). **Wilderness Queensland Calendar 1985** (Robert Rankin Publishing, RRP \$7.45). **Wild Places of Australia 1985** (Robert Rankin Publishing, RRP \$7.45).

When reviewing the 1984 wilderness calendars I commented that the market must be approaching saturation point, yet for 1985 I have two more to review than for 1984! Generally the quality of the better calendars has been maintained and that of the rest appears to have improved. It is therefore a safer bet than it has been previously to select the calendar depicting your favourite area.

*Alpine Australia* is a new entry to the field and a very good, albeit somewhat expensive, one. Whilst there is some unevenness of photo quality, the best are outstanding, capturing beautiful and unusual lighting conditions.

*Contemplation* remains the only black-and-white calendar reviewed. Its 'insights into Western Australia's bushlands', many of them close-ups, are again superb but the commercial appeal of this type of work is likely to be relatively limited.

The *Australian Climbing Calendar* failed to reappear in 1985 but an American one, *High Exposure*, is obtainable by mail order. Unusually, it is in a horizontal format. Another unusual feature is that dates of important American first ascents are shown in the calendar! The photos are good and well reproduced but hardly breathtaking, and the graphics are somewhat overstated.

The *New Zealand Alpine Calendar* has apparently changed hands. A number of the photos are good and the printing has improved but could continue to do so; several of the pictures appear underexposed. The graphics are typically New Zealandish — sixtiesish.

*Tasmania and Wilderness Flight* retains some good aerial photos but has also included some general touristy shots which are not likely to interest Wild readers.

Of smaller format than the others, *Victoria's National Parks* has improved considerably. Some of David Tatnall's pictures are particularly appealing.

This year Robert Rankin has published no less than three calendars. *Wilderness Australia*, *Wilderness Queensland* and *Wild Places of Australia* are workman-like rather than inspired works. The better photos, such as that of sedges in *Wild Places*, are very good, but many of the others are ordinary and some, like that of Douglas Creek in *Wild Places*, simply are not up to standard. *Wild Places* is in horizontal format.

Significantly, the word 'Tasmanian' has been dropped from the title of Dombrowski's calendar; for the first time it includes photos from further afield — Macquarie Island in this case. The new subject matter has breathed new life into an outstanding product, which is still the standard

provokes thought in its reflective depth and well-informed detail.

Valuable though it has been to save some of Tasmania's wilderness through the World Heritage Act, the areas described in this book deserve to be added to the Heritage areas.



Water-smoothed rock, Huon Gorge, Tasmania. Photo by Ted Mead, reproduced from *The Forest Book*. by which other wilderness calendars are judged, and found wanting. This difference, and the fact that Dombrowski was first into the field, is reflected in the *Wilderness Calendar's* well-deserved and complete dominance of the market.

The first photo in *Wilderness New South Wales* is printed out of register. Unfortunately some of the following photos do not appear to have been printed much better. This is a pity as many of Henry Gold's photographs are excellent and the landforms depicted are often dramatic.

Chris Baxter

**The Forest Book** Photographs of Tasmania's Endangered Forests compiled by Rob Blakers, Greg Buckman, Michael Krockenberger and Ian Salkin (Tasmanian Conservation Trust, 1984, RRP \$7.95).

This is a powerful book. It is short, with only 50 A4 pages, but it is full of quality.

*The Forest Book* contains photographs of Tasmania's threatened forests, in particular the highland forest around Quamby Bluff and the Western Tiers, the dry gum forest around Bicheno on the east coast of Tasmania, and the rainforest around the Weld River in Tasmania's South-West. They cover a variety of forest scenes, from glowing leaves to waterfalls and mountain scenery, as well as some striking shots of wildlife. There is very little text to support the photographs, but what there is

The most striking feature of the book is the last photograph. After the pages of forest richness the reader is confronted by the desolation of a clear-felled area, a rash of destruction which makes us realize how precious our forests are.

Brian Walters

**Wilderness Diary 1985** by Peter Dombrowski (Published by the author, 1984, RRP \$14.80).

Peter Dombrowski's name has long been associated with outstanding wilderness photography and superb photographic reproduction. More recently it has been connected with remarkable publishing successes. All are well justified.

His latest project, the *Wilderness Diary 1985*, is certain to bring him more acclaim and recognition that will be thoroughly deserved. This hard-cover book is superbly printed and bound and incorporates a beautiful selection of papers. The clean design complements the outstanding colour photos of Tasmanian wilderness and, interestingly, those of islands somewhat further south, particularly Macquarie Island.

This diary is a work of art and will surely sell out quickly. How many people can bring themselves to write in it, however, remains to be seen!

CB

**Fighting for Wilderness** edited by JG Mosley and J Messer (Australian Conservation Foundation/Fontana, 1984, RRP \$8.95).



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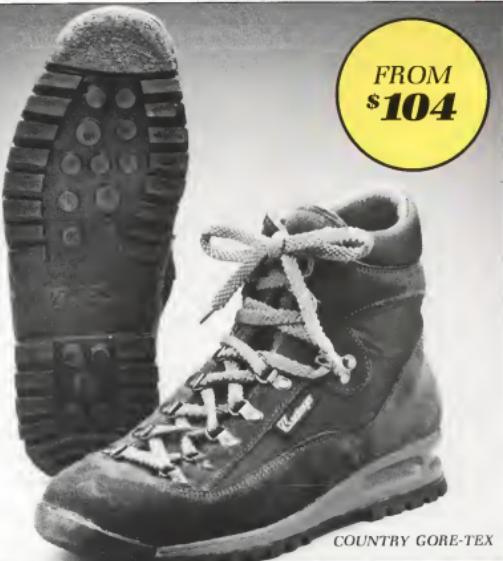
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**KASTINGER AT MOUNTAIN DESIGNS**



If ever a book summarized the state of things in conservation battles in our country today, this is it. It is a selection of papers from the Australian Conservation Foundation's Third National Wilderness Conference held in 1983. They are good papers: informed, realistic, and always concerned.

A glance through the book shows that there are many well-known names presenting papers: Dick Johnson writes on the struggle for an Alpine National Park in Victoria, Bob Brown on South-west Tasmania, Warren Bonython on the Gammon Ranges, Milo Dunphy on a wilderness conservation dedication programme for Australia, and Geoff Mosley writes on the case for a wilderness park in Antarctica.

Their papers do not disappoint. Throughout the book, we have insight from leading conservationists who have been at the forefront of the various struggles they write about. These campaigners tell us with frankness how they feel about the results of their efforts. For some, the result has been a spectacular success: the Franklin River is now as safe as it will ever be, (although one wonders how safe that is in view of statements made during the recent election campaign). For others, the struggle has been a long one. Dick Johnson has been fighting for an Alpine National Park for well over a decade. Slowly, there have been gains, but at the same time destruction has continued. Many of these papers speak of the political lessons learned from the different types of campaigns fought. In assessing the significance of the Franklin campaign, Penny Figgis sums up much of the impact of this book:

The Franklin campaign has enhanced both the legitimacy of the wilderness issue and the access of its advocates to the political process. It may also have weakened some intrinsic obstacles to success in wilderness campaigns. However, the issue had many particular characteristics which may not necessarily transfer to new issues. To gain most for the future, conservationists will have to walk a fine line between learning from and consolidating the gains of the campaign and the dangers of blindly extrapolating that, because something worked in the Franklin campaign, it will therefore work in the next campaign. Our ability to do so may determine the future of the wilderness remnants of this continent.

BW

**Wilderness**, Journal of the Wilderness Society, Number 19 (1984, RRP \$4.95).

*Wilderness* is an occasional journal of the Wilderness Society (formerly, of course, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society). The latest issue is a high quality production with articles of interest to wilderness lovers throughout Australia.

Bob Brown writes about his experiences in walking the Tribulation Track last Easter, and this is followed by an article by Dr Aila Keato on the significance of the wet tropical rainforests of the north Queensland region. There is assessment of the Franklin campaign, details on proposals to extend the World Heritage area in Tasmania, and articles on the Kimberley in Western Australia. All the material is backed with high quality colour and black-and-white photographs.

The best way to obtain a copy of this journal is to be a member of the Society. I am told that there are not many copies available for sale to the public.

BW

**Australian Adventurers** by Trish Sheppard (Angus & Robertson, 1984, RRP \$24.95).

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My initial reaction to this book was one of skepticism. It looked as if it might be another glossy coffee-table job, hastily thrown together to cash in on the booming 'adventure' industry. Certainly, there are plenty of examples of misdirected and superficial publications, periodical and otherwise, which fill this description.

It is obvious that the production of *Australian Adventurers* is good; the paper and photographic reproductions are above average. However, on delving into the chapters (one each on 20 Australian adventurers), I was pleasantly surprised that Trish Sheppard had indeed done her stuff. Not only has she identified important contenders from a weird and wonderful range of activities for inclusion in such a book, but she displays an understanding of their diverse fields.

The selection of a 'top 20' in any field is bound to be controversial but, generally, the majority of those selected are worthy of such recognition. But I could not help feeling that Ms Sheppard had bent over backwards to include women, particularly, for example, the 'backpacking grandmother'. Also, while Julia James is undoubtedly a leading and most respected Australian caver, Al Wardil is probably more of an 'adventurer'. Her bald comment that underwater photographers 'Ron and Valerie Taylor are without doubt Australia's top-ranking adventurers' sticks in the gutlet.

Whilst useful, the maps are not a strong point of this book.

But these are relatively minor criticisms. I found *Australian Adventurers* informative and inspirational.

CB

**The Atlas of Australian Birds** by M Blakers, SJF Davies and PN Reilly (Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union/Melbourne University Press, 1984, RRP \$49.50).

From our map we knew that somewhere between this swamp and the next lay an invisible line, a line that had lured us across five hours of wet-season Cape York, sweating through the liquid tropical midday sunshine, the tangled forest and the predatory swamps. The bait on the line was the birds that lived beyond it, for the line represented 142°E and at that time was the boundary of an area as yet unsurveyed for *The Atlas of Australian Birds*. Our list for the area began with a sarus crane who had strolled across the line before us and ended with a family of king quail scurrying for the sunset.

The popular image of bird-watching is not one of arduous enterprise; most people would picture backyard bird-baths or a gentle stroll in the bush. However there began in 1977 a project that demanded of Australian bird-watchers the same endurance and dedication that characterizes activities practised by the readers of *Wild*. *The Atlas of Australian Birds* was organized by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union to map the distribution of every species found in the country. The land was divided into degree blocks each about 100 kilometres square and over the next five years a bird list was obtained from each. The squares near the cities were rapidly covered, but major expeditions had to be organized to reach areas where no bird-watcher had been before. Walks into South-west Tasmania, perilous boat trips to remote off-shore islands, erratic journeys by four-wheel-drive vehicles across the empty corners of the inland — there are many adventurous tales told in the production of the book that now describes the results of the project.

It is a large work, over 850 pages, but it is equally ambitious. Each of 656 species has been allotted a separate page which contains

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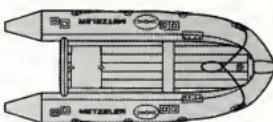
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not only the most up-to-date and accurate map of its distribution ever published, but a text discussing movements, abundance and, briefly but with a wealth of references, breeding biology and ecology. In one corner of each page is a black-and-white illustration by one of the 23 artists who have contributed to the book.

It is the co-operative nature of this book that makes it remarkable; at the back is an astonishingly long list of people who have contributed time, effort and, above all, bird records. There is also a full bibliography, a list of those exotic rarities that occasionally visit Australia by mistake, an extremely thorough introduction and additional maps for those species for which a change in distribution has been demonstrated by searching the historical records. Fortunately the ranges of only about a dozen species have declined although, alas, the paradise parrot appears to have gone forever.

At just under \$50 *The Atlas of Australian Birds* is extremely good value for the amount of information it contains. For anyone interested in birds it is a fascinating book in which to delve.

Stephen Garnett

**Eagles Hawks and Falcons of Australia** by David Hollands (Nelson, 1984, RRP \$49.95).

Australia's birds of prey have fascinated me since childhood so I opened this substantial (122 pages) volume with keen anticipation. I was not disappointed.

*Eagles Hawks and Falcons of Australia* is clearly the life's work of a fastidious and outstanding bird photographer. The colour reproductions of the many superb photos are excellent, as is the design and production of this book of unusual quality. It is obviously a work of great thoroughness and integrity. Hollands' admitted 'love of wild places' and 'lifelong fascination for hawks' are apparent in every page.

A chapter is devoted to each of the 24 diurnal birds of prey in Australia. These are well written, intriguing accounts of the author's search for his subjects and descriptions of them. Some, such as the red goshawk, are extremely rare — victims of man's ignorance and greed.

This is a wonderful and stimulating book that must be an essential reference for every serious ornithologist. It is also one which will be a delight to many other wilderness lovers who are not specifically ornithologists, provided they are able to arrange the necessary finance!

CB

**Birds of the Karri Forest** by Susan Tingay (Campaign To Save Native Forests, 1984, set of four prints, RRP \$15.00 plus \$1.50 packaging and postage).

These watercolour paintings (each 400 x 300 millimetres) are beautifully produced on heavy paper and presented in an attractive folder.

Susan Tingay is well known for her technical excellence as a wildlife artist. Her *Birds of the Karri Forest* prints exemplify her ability to animate the subject. There are four prints, featuring purple-crowned lorikeets, red-winged wrens, crested shrike-tits and red-eared firetails.

Ideal for framing, or as a special gift, the proceeds from these prints go towards the campaign to protect and preserve Western Australia's magnificent native forests.

They are available from the Campaign to Save Native Forests, 794 Hay Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000.

Rick Shepherd

**Canoeing Guide to Victoria** by the Victorian Amateur Canoe Association, Touring Committee (VACA, 1984, RRP \$7.95).

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920 Snowfield Modified Rectangular	920	1.9	-8° C	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Very good	Acceptable	—
900 Snowfield Mummy	900	1.8	-12° C	Acceptable	Good	Very good	Very good	Excellent	Very good	—
1100 Glacier Mummy	1100	2.0	-20° C	—	—	Acceptable	Acceptable	Very good	Excellent	Excellent

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This is the fifth edition of the *Canoeing Guide*. As well as updating the information of the previous edition (1981), 16 new rivers and six new lake descriptions have been added. There is also a new section covering the legal aspects of water frontage access.

Descriptions, including paddling times, river gradings, popular access and egress points, of 55 rivers are given. Although primarily a guide to rivers, information is included on 46 lakes.

This comprehensive guide will be invaluable to both beginners and experienced canoeists

and of interest to bushwalkers, campers and fishermen. It is a handy A5 size, and slim enough (128 pages) to fit comfortably in most places. Printed on water-resistant paper, and well bound, it should be able to take the hard wear that guides of this nature receive.

Yvonne McLaughlin

**Bushwalking** by Roger Lembit and David Noble (Methuen, 1984, RRP \$2.95).

This book is written by the 'hard men' of the New South Wales bushwalking scene. It is full

of good information, but I must protest at one idiosyncrasy.

In the section on 'footwear', the authors state 'boots are now considered largely unsuitable for serious bushwalking — since the 1950s, sandals have largely replaced them'. This is nonsense. It may be true in New South Wales, but it is certainly not true in many other regions, notably South Australia, where walking in the Flinders Ranges is very damaging to footwear and tough boots are necessary, as they are in Tasmania where good grip is required for the steep uneven ground and the ever-present possibility of snow.

I like to wear sandals myself where I know the terrain will be suitable, as it is in large parts of the Victorian and NSW Alps. However, I can remember a discussion with two adherents of the sandshoe school at a hut on Tasmania's Mt Anne. They had just come through 30 centimetres of snow on the Mt Eliza Plateau and waxed loud and long as to how good sandals were for bushwalking. But one of them found frost nip on his toes.

Sandshoes can be good, but so can boots: the decision as to which to wear should be based on the expected terrain.

Having said this, I still think the book is one of the better 'advice' books of its genre. It is quite short, only 64 pages long, but the economical style means that quite a lot of information is packed into it. At \$2.95 you can't go wrong.

BW

**The Living Planet** by David Attenborough (Collins, 1984, RRP \$25.00).

Perhaps the most popular book this season will be that by David Attenborough which accompanies the television series of the same name, and is a follow-up to the earlier book and series called *Life on Earth*.

It is a fascinating book, and in all ways thoroughly attractive. The excellent photographs cover a wide range of wildlife and many of them must have cost an enormous amount of patience, forethought, and even personal risk.

The text weaves round the photographs the story of the web of life covering our planet.

The delicacy of our eco-systems is such that they are constantly being threatened by development. This book does not merely have an Australian perspective, but deals with our planet as a whole. *The Living Planet* works well at a range of levels.

BW

**Coast to Coast** by Bruce Ansley and Bruce Foster (Icon Books, 1984, RRP \$NZ14.00).

Each year a coast-to-coast endurance race is held on the South Island of New Zealand. It begins at the Tasman Sea near Kumara, winds up the Taramakau valley, branches off across the mountains, snakes out of the foothills on the Waimakariri River, crosses the Canterbury Plains and finishes in the surf of the Pacific Ocean. The route involves cycling, running and canoeing and is not for the faint hearted. It crosses high mountains, requiring navigational and fitness skills, and includes a host of challenges to the boldest iron man or woman.

This book is a record of the 1984 event. There is some written description, but most of the book is photographic. There are exciting black-and-white photos of the race, exhausted runners struggling up a raging torrent in the New Zealand mountains, a cyclist crashing, canoeists struggling with rapids and elated finishers.

Amazingly, this route is covered by the contestants in just a week-end, and no doubt its popularity will continue to increase.

BW

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**LOWE-PRO AT MOUNTAIN DESIGNS**



# Wild Gear Survey Rucksacks

## A Comprehensive Review

• BUYING A RUCKSACK CAN BE A BEWILDERING exercise, even for experienced bushwalkers. The large, colourful, and seemingly endless array available from most retailers can cause confusion and a tendency to purchase on the strength of some minor feature which is of little long-term consequence. This survey should help you choose a pack that is right for you.

There are several broad categories of rucksacks to be considered. External frame packs were the standard for many years, and still have some advantages for carrying very large or awkward loads.

Internal frame packs began appearing in Australia about 12 years ago. These packs were lighter, carried closer to the wearer's centre of gravity, had load-bearing hip belt and, most important of all, had frames that were flexible. No longer was it necessary to put up with bruised flesh and chafed skin caused by a rigid structure bouncing against the back; if this did happen, the frame of an internal frame pack could be bent to relieve the pressure. Their acceptance by the walking public was so rapid that more than 95% of rucksack sales through specialist stores are now internal frames. This survey covers this new breed of packs and has been limited to those of at least 50 litres capacity, the usual cut-off point for people wanting a pack for overnight or longer trips.

For reasons of waterproofness and load distribution most bushwalkers stick to conventional designs. There are many more rucksacks available than are covered in this survey, but all major brands are represented. A maximum has been set of four models per manufacturer — Lowe for example makes 15 different models that could have been considered — and those covered will allow you to assess the performance of the brand. Different models within a brand usually vary only in features and sack size, and the harness will be the same as for one rated in the survey. So, having decided you want an internal frame pack suitable for bushwalking or cross country skiing, what do you look for?

By far the most important aspect of rucksack selection is the fit. This, plus the ability to hold together under rough treatment, are the most important things to consider. A good fit allows the rucksack to fit comfortably on the body with the hip belt in the correct position to enable it to support its share of the load and shoulder straps should be placed so that they don't cut into the neck or chafe under the arms. Obviously the same pack will fit differently on people of differing heights and physique, so most of the early internal frame packs attempted to fit people of differing back lengths by having several sizes available in each model — usually three. The timeless Berghaus Roc, perhaps the best known example of this type of pack, has fixed shoulder and hip straps so that the back length is also fixed for any given size. This is not necessarily a disadvantage providing you are not growing and that you intend to use the pack primarily yourself. More recently the trend has been to so-called adjustable models, in which the position of the shoulder harness that is attached to the back of the pack can be moved up and down, thus altering the effective back length.

The first adjustable brand widely available in Australia was made by Lowe Alpine Systems and has been much-copied. Unfortunately these

packs did not, in fact, actually adjust to fit people from very short to very tall as claimed by Lowe, due to the fact that the position of the top tensioning straps is fixed and limits the effective range of adjustment. In any case someone who is short will need a shorter pack than somebody very tall. This is because a standard back-length pack will rise well above the head or down over the buttocks of a short person. Another problem is that circumference of hips and breadth of shoulders are also variable areas. Thus we have now come full circle, with an increasing trend for manufacturers to offer adjustable packs in size options. This trend will probably continue and appears to be a good thing; with fine tuning available to individual requirements, packs are fitting better than ever before.

Most packs are designed for people of average height and weight; if you belong in this category a well-fitting pack should not be hard to find. Try on in the store a number of different harness styles to feel what is comfortable; the hip belt should wrap round the hips, the top of the belt should be roughly level with the top of the hips, the shoulder straps should be snug but not tight. Ask for assistance in getting the adjustments right — a few quick adjustments from a skilled salesperson can often make a big difference. When you have found a couple that you like, ask for them to be loaded with something heavier than crushed paper. The only way to tell what a pack really feels like is when it has ten to 15 kilograms in it. The ideal, of course, is to use one in the field before purchase, but this is seldom possible.

Because of the importance of the fit of the rucksack, ratings have been given for the fit for tall people (over 1.8 metres) and for short people (under 1.68 metres). It is evident from the table that those packs offering size options are the ones that generally rate better in these categories. It is recommended that people in these categories stick to the better rating models (at least three dots); there are still plenty to choose from. Lowe has two standard harness sizes but, rather than presenting them as options on each model, produces specific models with the smaller frame (called Nanda Devi or ND).

The fit of a rucksack is determined primarily by the harness or suspension system and this is the most important item to consider in rucksack selection. The harness is made up of the shoulder straps, hip belt, lumbar pad and a combination of other straps and tensioners such as chest straps. Check the foam in the harness; it should be firm for support but not so hard that it is uncomfortable. Soft foam may initially feel great but it will collapse under large loads and wear out rapidly. Many manufacturers use a double-layer foam with an outer layer of hard closed cell foam for support and an inner layer of softer foam to lie against the body. This works well, particularly in hip belts.

There are several different hip belt styles, the most significant difference being in the way the belt is attached to the pack. Some manufacturers have opted for an independent, or partly independent, hip belt. In these the belt is usually attached at middle back, leaving the bottom corners of the pack free to move independently. Usually stabilizer (bottom tension) straps are supplied which run from belt to pack to control the degree of independence.

## Wild Gear Survey Rucksacks

	Measured capacity	Mfr's claimed capacity	Sizes available
<b>Berghaus UK</b>			
AB 65	55 litres	65 litres	1
AB 70 GT	65,70	70,70	2
Roc	65,70	70,70	2
AB Expedition	75	80	1
<b>Camp Trails Canada</b>			
Timber	70	60	1
Tripper	85	70	1
<b>Canyon NZ</b>			
Cayley	65	65	1
<b>Caribee Korea</b>			
Eldorado	70	55	1
Barcelona	90	74	1
<b>Fairydown NZ</b>			
Breaking Ice	50,60,85	55,80,85	3
Terra Nova	70	70	1
Endeavour	85	85	1
<b>Flinders Rangers Australia</b>			
Explorer 1	75,80	65,70	2
Explorer 2	70,75	65,70	2
<b>Gregory USA</b>			
Rock Creek	na,65	56,58	2
Snow Creek	80	83	1
<b>Hallmark NZ</b>			
MF 90	70	75	1
Phoenix 2	85	90	1
<b>Jansport Korea</b>			
Arapiles	65	65	1
Hot Rock	65	65	1
<b>Karrimor UK</b>			
Condor 75	65	75	1
Jaguar S75	75	75	1
Jaguar S85	75	85	1
<b>Kelty USA</b>			
Last Arrow	65	80	1
El Capitan	90	80	1
<b>Lowe Ireland</b>			
Nanda Devi Fitzroy	50	55	1
Nanda Devi Cerro Torre	60	50	1
Triplet	75	60	1
Tramp II	80	75	1
<b>Macpac NZ</b>			
Cerro	55,65	55,60	2
Ascent	60,70	70,75	2
Cascade	70,75	70,75	2
Torre	70,80	80,85	2
<b>MEI USA</b>			
Eiger	85	80	1
Pacific Crest	85	80	1
<b>North Face USA</b>			
Talus	70,na	80,87	2
Moraine	na,75,na	62,72,82	3

## acks

Measured weight	Fabric	Body compartments	Pockets	Harness	Hip belt	Features	Comfort	Stability	Ventilation	Durability	Short person fit	Tall person fit	RR price
1.8 kg	Cordura	1	L	Adjust,Tt,Cs opt	Fixed	T I C D Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$136
2.0	Cordura	2	L,W	Adjust,Tt,Cs opt	Fixed	T I C D S A K	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$175
1.8	Cordura or canvas	1	L,M	Fixed,Tt,Cs opt	Fixed	T I C D S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$139
2.0	Cordura	1	L,W	Adjust,Tt,Cs opt	Fixed	T I C D S	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$167
2.2	Nylon & Cordura	3 <sup>a</sup>	L,2xM,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Independent	T I D S A K	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$173
2.1	Cordura	1	L,M,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E I D S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$170
2.0	Cordura	2	L	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T C S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$165
1.7	Cordura	2	L,S	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T I A	•	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$99
1.6	Cordura	2	L,F,S	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Independent	T D A Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$152
1.8	Cordura or canvas	1	L	Fixed,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E I C Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$141
2.0	Cordura or canvas	1	L	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E I C D Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$149
1.5	Canvas or Cordura	2	L,F	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E D Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$158
1.5	Canvas	1	L,M,F	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Independent	T C D S	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$172
1.5	Canvas	2	L,F	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Independent	T C D S	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$192
1.4	Nylon & Cordura	2 <sup>a</sup>	F opt	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Independent	I D S A SaK	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$358
1.7	Nylon & Cordura	2	L,F,opt,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Independent	T E I D S A SaK	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$396
1.0	Cordura	2 <sup>b,c</sup>	L	Adjust,Tt,Cs	Part indep	I S	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$181
1.2	Cordura or canvas	2	L,M,F,S	Adjust,Tt,Bt	Independent	T E I S	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$170
1.3	Cordura or nylon	2	L,M,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E I D S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$144
1.3	Cordura	2	L,M,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E I S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$150
1.2	KS 100e	2	L,M	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Independent	T I C D S A Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$194
1.8	KS 100e	2	L,S	Adjust,Tt	Fixed	T I C D A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$184
1.7	KS 100e	1	L,F	Adjust,Tt	Fixed	T I C D S A Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$172
0.9	Nylon	1	L,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T I C S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$195
0.4	Nylon	1 <sup>a</sup>	L,F,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E I D S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$235
0.1	Cordura or nylon	1	L,M,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	I D S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$162
1.1	Cordura or nylon	2	L,M,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E I D S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$174
1.4	Cordura or nylon	1	L,M,W	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	I D S A	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$181
1.2	Nylon	2	L,W,S	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	I D S A K	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$166
1.5	Canvas	1	F	Adjust,Tt	Part indep	T O Sa	• • ½	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$118
1.7	Canvas	1	L	Adjust,Tt	Part indep	T I C D Sa	• • ½	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$145
1.2	Cordura or canvas	2	L,F	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Independent	T O A Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$178
1.4	Canvas	1	L	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Independent	T E I C D A Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$169
1.8	Cordura	2 <sup>a</sup>	L,F,M	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E I S A Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$250
1.6	Nylon & Cordura	2 <sup>a</sup>	L,F,M	Adjust,Tt,Bt,Cs	Part indep	T E I S A Sa	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$250
0.9	Nylon	1	L	Adjust,Tt,Cs	Part indep	I D S A L	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$179
0.4	Nylon	1 <sup>a</sup>	L,2xF,M	Adjust,Tt,Cs	Part indep	T I D S A K	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	• •	\$219



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The advantage of this type of system is that it allows an excellent wrap of the belt round the body and any swaying of the pack is not automatically transferred to the hip belt where it would cause rubbing against the body. The theory is that as you walk, climb or ski, the hips and back are in constant motion relative to each other, and independence in the hip belt allows greater freedom of movement — particularly in steep country. However independent hip belts do tend to cause some loss of stability, although the effect can be controlled by adjustment of bottom tension straps. Most makes offer belts that are partially independent and some, such as Berghaus, have stuck with fixed-wing hip belts. Some people consider the advantages of independent belts have been overrated, but others swear by them.

The second component of the harness is the shoulder straps, which will support load in approximately equal proportions to the hip belt. Foam and shape are important here. Watch also for abrasive fabrics which will be uncomfortable in summer with light clothing. Much time and effort has been expended by pack designers trying to make contoured shoulder straps for a better fit, but the truth of the matter is that bodies come in so many different shapes that it is impossible to make the ideal straps — straps that are perfect for everyone. Consequently most makes have opted for minimal shaping. Watch for shoulder straps that are too wide or narrow on the shoulders, and make sure there is sufficient padded section to come well over the shoulders but not so much that no adjustment is left in the straps. The padded section should be generous but not too wide, about six or seven centimetres is ideal. A chest or sternum strap is very useful; it aids stability and helps support the load. Some makes offer these as optional extras and it is advisable to purchase one with the pack. They can be fitted to many packs where they are not specifically offered as an option.

Lumbar padding (the cushion which sits on the base of one's back), top tensioning straps and frame complete the story. Frames come in various shapes and configurations and, despite some manufacturers' claims of superiority of one shape over another, there appears to be little difference between them. The important thing is that all frames of the packs surveyed can be shaped as desired. Flat aluminium alloy strips are used throughout. (Except for Flinders Rangers packs which are also available with tubular frames as an option.) The gauge of this alloy does vary, some makes use heavier and stiffer material, but all packs tested were acceptable.

The comfort of a rucksack is closely linked to the fit but is also influenced by such factors as the softness and support of foam, ventilation, type of fabrics used in the harness and back panel, and the shaping of the pack body. All these factors were considered in arriving at the comfort rating.

Each pack surveyed has had its capacity measured in litres. This measurement includes all pockets fitted as standard and should be accurate to within five litres. These capacities vary considerably from manufacturers' ratings and for purposes of comparison will offer a far more accurate guide. Please note, however, that packs with lots of pockets and compartments are harder to pack to make use of all the available space, although in most cases body compartment dividers can be zipped out to form a single compartment if necessary.

As a general guide, a 50 litre pack will suit someone who travels very light, or more commonly is purchased by a female in a partnership in which the other partner carries

## Wild Gear Survey Ru

	Measured capacity	Mfr's claimed capacity	Sizes available
<b>Outgear Australia</b>			
Kapana 50	50	50	1
Kooring 70	65	70	1
Kapana 70	70	70	1
<b>Wilderness Equipment Australia</b>			
Wilderness Backpack	na,na,65,na	62,68,74,80	4

ne information not available

**Measured weight** is given for large size

**Short person fit** is rated for small size if available

**Tall person fit** is rated for tall size if available

**Prices and weights** are for first-item fabric option

\*Three body-compartment convertible to one

\*Top compartment has front-opening zipper

\*Bottom compartment auto-latches into internal stuff sack

\*Subsidary zip access in pack front

\*Access zip round pack base

more than half. In any case, people of short stature can be limited in the capacity of the rucksack they can purchase because packs with shorter, narrower frames have less capacity. Sixty to 65 should be large enough for two to three-day walks, while those planning longer sojourns in the bush would be in the 70 litres-and-above class. It is worth noting that the pack should be large enough for the longest trips you do, even if it is normally to be used mainly on week-ends. Some packs have extendable throats and lids which will increase capacity if required; others have side compression straps which will reduce capacity to some extent, but side compression straps are not as effective in this regard as some manufacturers claim. Packs were also weighed and this is the weight shown in the table. Weights also commonly varied from manufacturer's specifications.

Without doubt the greatest single reason for initial resistance to internal over external frames was that their body-hugging profiles not only produced a more stable, comfortable carry but also a very sweaty back! With a uniform layer of foam built into the back panel, the back of the wearer and the back of the pack were in close contact and, despite various stitch channels, poor ventilation was considered the price paid for the other advantages of the internal frame. More recent designs have improved ventilation considerably by using heavily padded lumbar pads which not only cushion the lower back but have allowed the pack to be slightly offset in the upper regions. Some makes have improved ventilation further by using open-weave, breathable fabrics in lumbar construction. The best of these models are still not as well ventilated as the external frames, but they are closer. It should be noted, however, that the closer the pack sits to the back, the more stable the carry. The beauty of the internal frame/lumbar pad combination is that it can be worn either way — by bending the frame away from the back to allow an air tunnel, or so that it follows the back contour closely.

Packs were assessed for durability using a number of criteria — types of material, construction techniques, stitching, load-bearing zippers. Naturally it was not possible to field test the packs to destruction. Cordura nylon is widely used and is without doubt a very rugged fabric. The polyester/cotton canvas used in most canvas packs surveyed is also very tough,

# sacks

Measured weight	Fabric	Body compartments	Pockets	Harness	Hip belt	Features	Comfort	Stability	Ventilation	Durability	Quality	Short person fit	Tall person fit	RR	Price
1.8	Canvas	1	L/F opt	Adjust,T1,Cs	Fixed	I D S A	• •	• • •	•	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• •	\$125
1.5	Canvas	1	L/F opt	Fixed,T1	Fixed	A	• •	• • •	•	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• •	\$108
1.9	Canvas	1	L/F opt	Adjust,T1,Cs	Fixed	I D S A	• •	• • •	•	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• •	\$135
2.8	Canvas or Cordura	2	L/F opt,M	Adjust,T1,Cs opt	Part indep	I C D A Sa L	• •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	• • •	\$148
			L lid F front M map S side W waist	Adjustable back length T top tension straps B1 bottom tension straps Ca chest strap opt optional	Part indep partially independent	T threat E extending lid I ice axe attachment C reinforced champion pad D double base S side compression straps A lid frame or base accessory attachment points Sa side accessory attachment points K internal sleeping bag compression straps L waterproof pack liner included									

although not as abrasion-resistant as Cordura. Lighter grade eight ounce coated nylons are popular with American manufacturers, usually in combination with a Cordura base. These fabrics are not as tough as their heavier weight cousins but are usually fine quality and will stand all but heavy scrub bashing. Look for straight, even, stitching; main load-bearing seams should be double stitched and stress points reinforced with extra stitching or bar tacks. Some makes have overlocked or tape-bound seams to prevent fraying of raw fabric edges.

The strongest type of bag is a single compartment with as few seams as possible. Although zippers on multi-compartment sacks are a potential trouble point, the heavyweight coil zippers used by many manufacturers have an excellent track record and are not a significant concern.

Durability of the harness is equally important as the bag. The more complex the harness, the greater the potential for mishap, although a well-constructed complex harness is much better than a shoddy simple one. Quality of foam used in shoulder, hip and lumbar pads is important; poor foam weakens and loses its body rapidly. Foam was one of the more significant variables discovered between rucksacks and bar bags.

Makes were downrated because of this factor.

Canvas is by far the most waterproof pack fabric and is the only one which can be satisfactorily reproofed. Cordura (nylon) and nylon packs leak along seam lines and rely on an internal coating on the fabric for waterproofing. Coatings on these fabrics vary depending on the source of the fabric. Karrimor's KS 100e is similar to Cordura with an excellent, specially formulated coating. All these coatings wear with age and cannot be replaced. Pack design also affects waterproofness. The fewer seams the better, and a good, snug fitting lid helps. Zippers are not in any way waterproof and the packs using them will be significantly worse in regard to dampness despite the flaps which usually cover them. But it should be noted that no pack is completely waterproof and in wet climates important items such as clothing and sleeping bags should always be carried in double plastic bags. Rain covers can be purchased which go over the outside of the pack and these are very effective, although they have little chance of surviving prickly scrub. Waterproof liner bags are also obtainable (they are supplied with Wilderness Equipment and North Face Talus

packs) and whilst less effective than rain covers are more convenient and let the rucksack fight off the scrub.

In the opinion of some, the least important facet of a rucksack is the number of compartments and pockets, but since that is the first thing looked at by many people a few notes are in order. A lid pocket is supplied on most packs. If you like to carry a SLR camera be aware that some pockets are not deep enough to take one. Front pockets are something of a rarity. The Flinders Rangers Explorer 1 has a front pocket which zips off to become a day pack. They have the advantage of not impeding progress through the bush, but because they are furthest away from your centre of gravity they have a maximum 'pull back' effect. The trick is not to load them with dense objects such as your water bottle. Side pockets are out for scrub bashing and impair arm motion if cross country skiing, so are not usually offered as a fixed option. It should be noted that every pack (except one) in the survey that had no fixed side pockets could have these strapped on as optional extras. The exception is the Outgear Kooring. Zippered map pockets can be handy and are available on some models.

Two-compartment packs have the advantage of better access — you can pull your sleeping bag out of the base to start lashing as soon as the tent is up — but are more expensive, less waterproof and can be awkward to pack. The best types have a zip-out divider inside so that the pack can be loaded as a single compartment, which is much easier.

Most packs have various other accessory straps. Ice climbing attachments are often supplied but in Australia are seldom used for the purpose intended. Because of its bulk a foam mat is frequently the only item regularly carried strapped to the outside of packs. There is very little to be said for strapping sleeping bags, billys or tent poles on the outside unless they really won't fit inside, which is the safest and driest place for them. It is far better to purchase a pack large enough for your needs to start with.

The availability of different makes varies according to the State you are in. Some products are restricted to certain chains of shops. The four most widely available makes are Lowe, Macpac, Karrimor and Berghaus, the others gradually less so till, at the other extreme, is the Wilderness Equipment pack which is available across the counter only in Perth. Most outlets offer mail order for those who live away from

the main cities.

The quality of a rucksack depends on design, materials and construction. This is not the same thing as durability, although a good quality rucksack is likely to be more durable than a poor quality one. Materials such as webbing, buckles, zippers and foam should be appropriate for the job on hand. These four components varied considerably in the rucksacks surveyed. For example the wrong type of webbing can make adjustment through buckles either extremely difficult or allow slippage under load. Quality fabrics need to be strong, waterproof and a good tight weave for seam-holding ability. All of the packs surveyed used good quality fabrics. Packs made of lower grade nylons were excluded from the survey as being unsuitable for all but very occasional use.

Quality construction entails straight, evenly spaced stitching at correct tension, seams that are well finished to prevent fraying or coming adrift from their ends and thread that is strong and resistant to ultra violet light.

Quality design shows in attention to detail. This produces a rucksack with as few annoying bugs as possible. All packs experience considerable stress during normal use and it is the design which ensures that these stresses can be adequately supported by the various components.

It is impossible to recommend such a thing as the 'best' rucksack. Suitability depends not only on the fit for the particular individual but also on the intended type and amount of usage, importance of price, features required and so forth. However it is possible to make some recommendations.

For the keen bushwalker who likes to do a mix of extended trips and week-end walks, a large capacity single compartment pack is an advantage and I would recommend the Lowe Triplet, Macpac Torre or Berghaus AB Expedition. For those on a budget wanting a good, sturdy, basic pack, the locally made Outgear Kooring is hard to beat. For growing youngsters a single adjustable pack is probably best and it is suggested the Macpac Cerro is worth a look. The Gregory Snow Creek is without doubt the best quality pack surveyed and it offers plenty of features — including a huge price tag. If your preference is for some special feature, such as two compartments or ice gear attachments, then look through the table — all the information that you could possibly need should be there! •

Nell Blundy

# Equipment

• **Dancer.** Not to be outdone on the cross-linked polyethylene plastic kayak front (see *Wild Nos 9 and 14*), Melbourne's **Canoes Plus** is importing the **Ace-Perception Dancer** from the UK.

Ideal for white water paddling, the rotationally-moulded, one-piece (except for the seat) Dancer is claimed by the distributor to be virtually indestructible and therefore also suitable for schools. RRP \$635.



Ace-Perception Dancer. Trevor Pinder

• **More From Gore.** **Gore-Tex** has many uses; it is used in industry and medicine as well as the more familiar waterproof clothing. When making Gore-Tex fabric, the thin white Gore-Tex membrane is usually laminated to an inside layer of light tricot and an outside structural layer of nylon. It can be laminated to most forms of nylon to give a wide range of textures and weights.

Most recently, Gore-Tex has been laminated to Cordura nylon to give a very robust fabric with superior abrasion- and tear-resistance. This lamination is called **Strata fabric** and will be used by **Verglas Australia** in a wide variety of its wilderness clothing.

**Gates cross country ski gloves**, which sold last winter for \$58, were remarkably successful. The secret of their success is an internal floating Gore-Tex membrane glove which is only sewn in at the wrist. This internal glove is sandwiched between the outer fabric and the Thinsulate insulation and inner lining. The seams on the internal glove are welded to prevent leakage.

**Gore-Tex boots** are also kicking around. **Meindl** (imported by **Wild Country**) has two models; a lightweight walking boot (RRP \$142) and a Nordic ski boot which will sell for about \$92 next winter. Like the Gates gloves, these boots have a continuous Gore-Tex membrane sandwiched between the outer and lining.

The walking boot features a low-erosion Vibram sole with small lugs under the instep. An EVA foam wedge mid-sole, together with a removable anatomical foam foot-bed, cushion the heel. A rubber rand protects the suede and

nylon upper from abrasion. The boot has a glove-leather lining and a padded tongue and cuff. Its last is designed for Australian feet, varied though they may be. It has a high instep and arch and is broad at the toe.

The Nordic ski boot is similar in last to the walking boot but is otherwise quite different. It features the excellent Salomon boot binding system, but it should be remembered that it will not fit a standard Nordic Norm binding. It is cut to just above the ankle bone, but there is no padded cuff. Like the walking boot it has a removable foot-bed and glove-leather lining.

• **XCD Skiing.** The tight economy and poor seasons in Europe show on our, also depressed, market.

Most manufacturers are carefully adding only one new model to their range of skis rather than changing the cosmetics and construction of their entire collection as in previous years.

**Fischer** has a new model, **Ultra Crown**, featuring air composite core and carbon glass construction; dimensions 49-47-48 centimetres, weight 1,250 grams for a 210 centimetre pair and approximate cost \$180. They are a little stiff and not for a beginner. The Crown base has been altered on the entire range to provide more grip.

**Karhu** has improved the Multigrade surface on its skis. The rucksack-touring variety **XCD Multigrade**, retailing at about \$195, should be popular with Telemark and touring enthusiasts.

**Kneissl** has an elite model, **White Star Phantom**; dimensions 66-55-61 centimetres, designed for lift-serviced areas. RRP \$375. It did not take the Telemarkers long to forget how to walk uphill!

**Rossignol** has stayed with its proven heavy touring models at \$156; a good ski if you carry a heavy pack.

**Kazama** has a few new models to do justice to Australian snow conditions. They will be available in both wax and waxless skis. Few details are available yet, but they should be worth looking at for XCD.

Most of the heavy boots are very similar in performance. **Asolo**, **Scarpa**, **Meindl** and **Merrell**, to name only a few, fall in the \$100-\$250 range for double-lined models and work well for XCD. Some double boots have appeared but they are heavy, expensive and very stiff, being made for extremely cold conditions. However, on downhill runs they are on their own.

Most heavy boots are still using 75 millimetre Nordic Norm bindings. This binding is still the most common and is well known to experienced skiers.

New **boot-binding systems**, such as **Salomon** and **Look**, are very precise in control for XCD but are manufactured with smooth soles only. As smooth soles are not very practical for walking uphill and across ice, serious tourers who need to walk to the snow are not yet catered for and will have to wait for Vibram-soled models to appear.

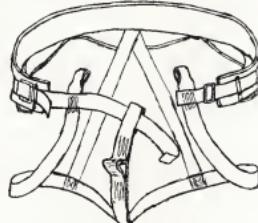
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Most manufacturers have strengthened their Nordic Norm **bindings** to suit thick-soled boots to accommodate the stresses of downhill runs. It will soon become common to pay \$50 for good XCD bindings.

Skis are stronger, bindings tougher and boots stiffer and therefore more rigid. The skier is now the weak link in the chain and it is only a matter of time before we will need safety-release bindings to protect people and their equipment.

Fritz Schaumberg

• **Interesting Edibles.** There are few topics more controversial than pack food. Anyone who has organized victuals for an expedition would realize this. While some people would carry fresh meat to the point of it going off, others can survive on rice and lentils for weeks on end. However, for many, variety is the spice of life.

When **freeze-dried food** first became commercially available several years ago, it was considered a great boon to pack carriers. Since then, many have tired of the familiar taste. Another brand of freeze-dried food is now being imported from America by **Rare and Unique**, and **Backpacker's Pantry** offers some interesting foods which would add variety to any bushwalker's menu. Main courses include Whole Wheat Fettuccini, Spinach Noodle Stroganoff and Spanish Pilaf. Desserts include Blueberry D'lite and Mocha Mousse Pie. Breakfasts and snacks are also available.

We tried Casheew Mushroom Curry and found it very palatable. This particular meal required no cooking, only reconstituting with boiled water. It reconstituted well, and a two-serve pouch costs about \$7.50.

While hot dogs can scarcely be called gourmet, they are popular. **Plumrose** has introduced smoky flavoured, extra-long **frankfurts** in a light foil pack. Free of preservatives, they contain little fat and require no refrigeration. As they are pre-cooked in the foil pouch they require only heating in water or light pan frying. Alternatively they can be eaten cold so if desired — useful on a Total Fire Ban Day. A pack of five frankfurts (200 grams) costs \$1.39.

• **Handy.** The popular pre-shrunk Dachstein wool mittens have served all sorts of mountaineers extremely well for many years. In addition, **Karimor Australia** is importing a new range of **Dachstein gloves**. Also pre-shrunk, they are not as heavily felted as the mittens. Their fine, dense knit is quite rugged yet supple enough to allow good finger articulation.

The basic **Trek** glove sells for about \$23, while the same or fingerless glove with a supple leather palm is about \$32. Designed for gripping ice tools but with obvious applications for Nordic skiing, the **Mont Blanc Extreme** glove has a reinforced thumb, forefinger and palm and costs about \$36.

• **Climbing On.** We continue to be impressed by the number of new products available on the rapidly expanding climbing market.

This issue we review two more harnesses now available in Australia. From France comes the 525 gram **Petzl Vercors** model **harness**, available in two sizes. Whilst it appears to be just another copy of the Whillans harness, like the Zero Point harness reviewed in *Wild* no 14 it includes a number of interesting and worthwhile refinements.

In this case these include a particularly well-padded waist-band, reinforcing at key points, attractive colours and some important information on the firmly-attached fabric label, such as how to put the harness on and the year it was made. It also says that it is only to be used



To, Plumrose Smokehouse Frankfurts and, above, Backpacker's Pantry freeze-dried meals.

with a UIAA-approved chest harness. This is a point that the distributor must clarify at an early date; chest harnesses are almost never seen in Australia. The instructions about the harness are repeated in both the leaflet and stuff sack it comes with. The Vercors is available through **Spelean and Jim the Backpacker**. It retails for \$36, which seems rather high.

Another respected European company, **Mammut**, has a **harness** (AF, for 'all free') model available in Australia — through **Four Seasons Imports**. As you would expect of Mammut it is well designed and made. Available in two sizes, it retails for a remarkably reasonable \$38.60.

**Boreal Fire friction boots**, distributed locally by **Verglas Australia**, have certainly taken the climbing world by storm. Many climbers swear they are a quantum improvement over other boots. Now Boreal has introduced a second model, the **Cat**, which is fabric-lined. Further, the original model, apparently now known as the **Classic**, has been modified to reduce stretching of the leather uppers.

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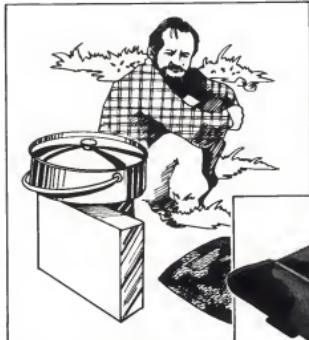


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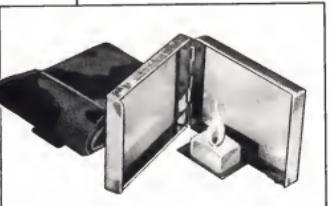


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Energetic Summit Gear is now making a range of **sewn slings** said to be tested to an impressive 2,000 kilograms. At prices ranging from \$2.40 for a 19 centimetre quick-draw to \$4.00 for a gear sling they are excellent value.

A company under the unlikely name of **Mega Marketing** has developed an equally unlikely product called **Easy Ends** — pieces of polyolethane tubing for heat shrinking over the ends of ropes to seal and/or identify them! Available in blue or yellow, a pack of four retails for \$1.50, or ten for \$2.90.

• **Pyromaniacs.** Three stainless steel outdoor cooking systems, made by American firm **Pyromid**, are being imported by **Scout Outdoor Centres**.

The smallest is a simple, solid-fuel stove designed to run on Esbit tablets. The hinged **Pyro Pocket Stove** opens to form a wedge-shaped enclosure, which protects the fuel from the wind and supports pots and pans. It looks bomb-proof and weighs 200 grams. RRP \$15.95.

The **Pyroduo** (RRP \$45) weighs 600 grams and is designed to run on wood, charcoal or other dry fuels. It is similar in concept to the **Pyromid** (RRP \$69) which is designed to enclose an entire campfire. Both have pyramid shapes which focus heat, increasing efficiency while sheltering the fire from rain. The Pyromid weighs 950 grams. All three stoves fold down completely, packing into Cordura wallets.

• **Sleeping Comfort.** It was not long ago that bushwalking or ski touring meant a night spent on hard ground or, worse, cold snow, with an inadequate sleeping bag inside a flapping tent — a sure recipe for a bad night's sleep.

Certainly tent and sleeping bag design and materials have come a long way, but it was with the advent of the **self-inflating air mattress**, or **Therm-a-Rest**, that sleep really came easily, although there have been some unhappy curses from those who have sustained punctures and been let down in the middle of the night.

Now Therm-a-Rest has competition, from the **Metzeler Thermo** mattress. Closely resembling the Therm-a-Rest, this German mattress is cheaper than its rival. Imported by **Four Seasons Imports**, it measures 180 x 53 x 3 centimetres, sells for \$68.95 and weighs 980 grams. A shorter model will be available early in 1985.

**Silk inner sheets** are also all the rage. **DB Stuff** is producing standard length (\$36) and long (\$38) sheet out of this marvellous natural fabric.

Yet, though it seems improbable, many weary walkers and skiers still find it hard to get to sleep — there is no 'hi-tech' cure for snoring companions!

• **Boots.** The latest offering from **Rossi**, the Australian boot manufacturer, is an updated **Plover**. With a padded cuff which extends over the ankle, it has a sewn-in padded tongue which goes right down towards the toe. The lacing system features D-rings and hooks. This wide-lasted boot weighs 1.6 kilograms for a pair of size 8½. You can expect to pay around \$100.

• **New Lens.** **Sola**, the only makers of ophthalmic lenses in Australia, is manufacturing a new type of spectacle lens. Called the **Sola UV Gard**, the lens not only protects against the shorter wave-length radiation, which causes effects such as snow-blindness, but is also effective for longer wave-length radiation. The possible harmful effects of prolonged exposure to long-wave radiation have only recently been researched and include a variety of medical conditions.

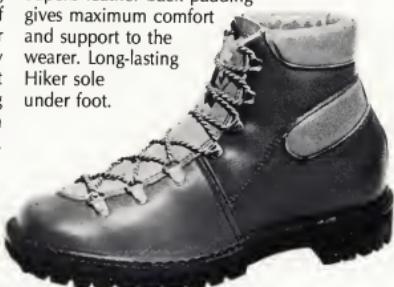
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# Wildfire

## Choice Words

In response to your comments on the Condor rucksack (*Wild* no 13, page 85) Karrimor Australia would like to issue the following statement regarding the hip belt mechanism. The 'possible' problem you referred to was realized by Karrimor International, UK, some months ago. It was felt that this problem (if it did occur) would be extremely isolated. However, Karrimor still took the precautionary measure of fitting a metal plate to Condor rucksacks in production.

This will eliminate the problem.

All those purchasers of Condor rucksacks in Australia to date who have registered their lifetime guarantee with Karrimor Australia will be sent the metal plate together with fitting instructions.

Our final comment we would like to put forward is the strongest possible way.

It relates to the final two paragraphs on page 85. Whilst it is your right to comment on the equipment you test, we believe you have demonstrated little wisdom in choosing your words. You have questioned (and thereby shed doubt on) a Karrimor product which comes with a lifetime guarantee.

Please understand that it is not just the KS100e fabric alone which comes under this guarantee — but the entire product. This includes the stitching, the belts, the straps etc — everything connected with the article.

No other rucksack manufacturer matches this guarantee for its product. Quite obviously Karrimor could not make such an outstanding guarantee without having absolute faith in design, production method and material quality; a full understanding of product use and faith in the character of the user.

Karrimor has a long and detailed historical knowledge of complaints, fail ratios and cost. The company has produced products of the highest quality and integrity for over 25 years and will continue to maintain this high standard.

We would appreciate it if you would publish this letter to bring the information to the attention of your readers.

Jim Graham  
Karrimor Australia Pty Limited  
Alexandria, NSW

### Praised

... I will take this opportunity to say how much we enjoy our *Wild* magazine. The day it arrives there is always a scramble to get it first and read it. It is extremely well done and a fountain of information too. Our family congratulates everyone involved with producing it.

Dawn Buckberry  
Helensvale, Qld

### Paddled

I am a regular subscriber to your magazine, and generally enjoy it.

I have just finished reading 'Paddling Their Own' by Yvonne McLaughlin. As a longtime

canoeist, and as a woman, I found the overall tone of the article was 'sexist' and carried the inference of 'Come on girls, give it a try'. Should not encouragement to participate in any outdoor recreation activity be oriented towards people rather than men or women?

McLaughlin should attempt to overcome any feelings she may have as being significantly different from men in outdoor activities, and perhaps those 'macho' images of male paddlers will fade away by themselves.

Trish Macdonald  
Downer, ACT

### Blasting Antarctica

Since 1982 the French Government, ignoring protests even from many of its own scientists, has been constructing an airstrip in the Pointe Geologie region of France's Antarctic claim.

The 1,100 metre airstrip is a six-year project over two-month summer periods and will involve the levelling of five small islands (some 30-40 metres high) — 330,000 cubic metres of rock will be poured into the sea to join the Islands together!

Construction of the strip has already resulted in the destruction of adelle penguin nests and deaths due to blasting activities. If allowed to continue, destruction is assured for the reproductive sites of about 3,200 adelle penguins, 12 skuas, and at least 180 cape pigeons, 100 snow petrels and 170 Wilson's petrels. The colonization of new nesting sites is highly improbable for the majority of these birds.

Long-term impacts will be felt by other local fauna. A colony of emperor penguins, Antarctica's largest bird, near the French base has had its population halved since the 1950s, coinciding with a high level of human activity in the region ...

Conservationists consider that, by their actions, the French have blatantly breached the Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora, signed and ratified by the Antarctic Treaty nations (including France and Australia). Failure by these nations to prevent the airstrip's construction has serious implications for the ability of the Antarctic Treaty to handle similar problems with environmental impacts due to increasing levels of human activity ...

Concerned readers should write to the French Embassy, Canberra, ACT 2600 and the Honourable W Haydon, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600 expressing concern on this issue.

Richard Frizzell  
Information Officer  
Greenpeace Hobart Support Group  
Hobart, Tas

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Write to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Clubs are invited to use this column to advertise their existence for the benefit of novices and newcomers to their sport. Let members stay in touch and to give notice of their meetings and other activities.

**ANU Mountaineering Club** meets first Wednesday each month at 8 pm at Australian National University, Canberra. Activities include canoeing, climbing, bushwalking, skiing and rockclimbing. Interested people should contact the club through the ANU Sports Union, the President (062) 81 0357 or Treasurer (062) 49 4494.

**The Victorian Climbing Club** meets at 8 pm on the last Thursday of each month (except December); and the last Thursday in September, at 188 Gatehouse Street, Parkville 3052. Visitors and new members interested in rockclimbing are welcome. Contact the Secretary, GPO Box 1725P, Melbourne, Victoria 3001.

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